Arizona Reading First
Annual Evaluation Report
2005-2006

Submitted by:

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Arizona State University
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CHAPTER I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reading First is a federal initiative under *No Child Left Behind* aimed at ensuring that all students read at grade level by the end of third grade. Arizona received a Reading First grant in the 2002-2003 academic year, and beginning the following year, provided funds for individual Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools to implement the Reading First improvement program in kindergarten, first, second and third grade classrooms. This model includes intensive professional development for teachers in elementary reading; the use of a scientifically-based core reading program; heavy reliance on data to make decisions about the grouping and instruction of students and provision of interventions to students in need of them; and the building of leadership capacity, in districts, among principals, reading coaches, and more broadly in the school through Reading Leadership Teams.

The Arizona Reading First program completed its third year of implementation in schools in 2005-2006. All 63 cohort 1 schools had three full years of implementation, and the nine cohort 2 schools that began a year later finished their second year of implementation. Both cohorts demonstrated positive gains in student achievement as well as growth in the implementation of many program components.

This Executive Summary presents highlights drawn from each of the chapters of the 2006 *Annual Evaluation Report* and then lists the major recommendations emerging from these findings. The *Report* presents the findings for the year from the external evaluation of Reading First conducted by the Arizona Prevention Resource Center at Arizona State University in conjunction with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The external evaluation has been an on-going part of the Reading First plan and uses multiple evaluation instruments to collect data on both the student outcome assessment scores as well as on the various aspects of implementation. Data are integrated by topic area across instruments to present multiple views on each subject.

Student Achievement

Under Arizona Reading First, student achievement in reading is monitored three times a year using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS). The Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) is also administered, once a year, to measure levels of student achievement.

DIBELS Test Scores

The DIBELS are a set of standardized, individually administered measures used to assess students' early literacy development. The Instructional Support Recommendation describes the students' overall progress toward proficient reading: benchmark – an established reader at grade level; strategic – in need of some specific additional work; or intensive – an at risk reader in need of attention to most reading components. Figure 1-1 presents the percentage of students "at benchmark" on the DIBELS at the beginning and end of the 2005-2006 school year.

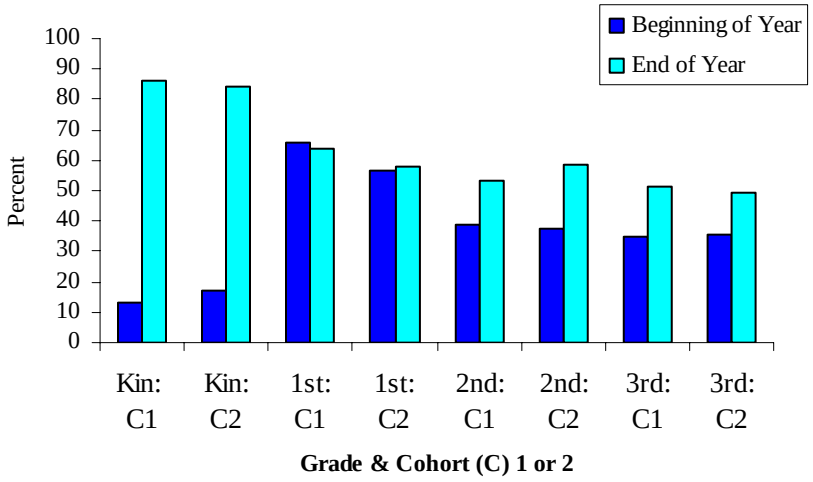

Figure 1-1
Percent of Students at Benchmark on the DIBELS
Beginning & End of the Year 2005-2006

- At the end of the year, the 72 Reading First schools had met the Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) goal of 75 percent of kindergarten students at benchmark. Approximately 85 percent of kindergarten students ended the year at benchmark.

- While 64 percent of first-grade students (in the 63 school group) ended the year at benchmark, this was actually a slight decrease from the percent of students who began the year in the benchmark category.

- The second- and third-grade students (in the 63 school group) gained about 15 percent each in the percent at benchmark at the end of the year benchmark. Despite these gains, only slightly more than half of the students were above benchmark in these grades.

- At all grade levels, a higher percent of Reading First students scored at benchmark at the end of the year than did students in the Comparison group.

- The subset intact groups who spent three-years (K, 1 & 2; or 1, 2, & 3) in the Reading First program ended with a slightly higher percent of students (4.4% and 3.3% respectively) at benchmark than did the overall groups of Reading First students at those grade levels.

AIMS Test Scores

The evaluation also utilized reading scores from the AIMS assessment that examines students' knowledge of the Arizona State Standards.

- Compared to last year, this year a higher percent of Reading First students passed AIMS; there were higher percentages of Reading First students in the meet and exceed categories in 2006 (53.5%) than in 2005 (50%).

- Correspondingly, there were lower percentages of Reading First students in the lower AIMS categories this year than last (falls far below and approach: 46.5% in 2006 and 49.3% in 2005).

- While just over half of the third grade students in Reading First and the Comparison group passed the AIMS reading test, 75 percent of all Arizona third grade students did so.

Instruction and Interventions

Under Reading First – both in Arizona and in other states around the country – schools are expected to adopt a common core reading program, based on scientific reading research and used across classrooms and across grades in the school. They are supposed to provide a minimum of 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction each day, with additional time allocated to provide intensive interventions, in small groups, for those students who are at risk of not reading at grade level. Instruction should be clear and engaging and utilize practices shown to improve student achievement.

Instruction and Use of the Core Program

- By the end of the third year of school implementation, a 90-minute (or longer) reading block had become normal and routine for the schools. In fact, over half of schools (59%) devoted additional time beyond the 90 minutes to reading, adding as much as 10 to 90 minutes of daily reading instruction.

- The use of core reading programs was also well-established. Although there were continuing discussions and disagreements about the meaning of "fidelity to the core program," most schools were following the scope and sequence laid out in the core program. Regardless of which program a school selected, satisfaction with the program was high (70% of teachers, and higher for coaches and principals).

- In Arizona Reading First, instruction is to be delivered to students both at grade and instructional level. Much of the grade-level instruction was delivered whole group, often to fairly large class sizes (most teachers reported reading classrooms of 20 to 25 students). Many schools utilized extended reading time and/or intervention time to provide small group instruction, usually targeted closer to students' instructional level. It was not very common to use homogeneous grouping techniques such as "walk-to-read" to increase the amount of

time students were taught at their instructional-level. While most teachers reported that their students received some differentiated instruction, concerns remained that it was not always adequate.

- Fewer than half of all teachers believed that that Reading First was meeting the needs of English language learners. While there were successes with some specific Reading First instructional practices (interventions, practice opportunities, templates and small group instruction), they tended to be outweighed by challenges teachers continued to experience in this area. Concerns included a lack of materials matched to the needs of these students as well as the teacher knowledge and skills to differentiate and modify as necessary.

- Observations of 81 classrooms across 27 schools evidenced the following general patterns:

    - **Clearly presented lessons** were observed in almost three-quarters of classrooms visited (73%), which represented an increase from the first and second years.
    - **Strong explicit modeling** was noted in one third of observed classrooms (34%), very similar to the year before.
    - **Use of guided questioning** was observed in half of classrooms visited (49%); this represented an increase from the year before.
    - **Monitoring of student understanding and adjustment of instruction** was seen in over half of observed classrooms (59%), similar to the two years before. However, in a substantial proportion of classrooms (41%), observers did not see clear evidence of this.
    - **Provision of direct, frequent and effective feedback** was noted in about half of observed classrooms (54%), an increase from the first and second years. However, the remaining half of classrooms (46%) did not provide clear evidence of this.
    - **Strong student engagement** was observed in almost two-thirds of the classrooms visited (63%), also an increase from the first and second years.

Interventions

- In 2005-2006, Reading First schools already had their intervention structures (plans, schedules, providers, materials) in place and reported greater confidence in their intervention program than the year before. However, they served a smaller number of students than the prior year. Still, about half of schools reported that all students who needed interventions got them. Insufficient staffing was cited as primary obstacle cited at those schools that did not provide interventions to all students who needed them.

- When schools had to make difficult decisions about which students should receive interventions, schools varied in their approach. Some chose to work first with those who were furthest behind, while others first addressed the needs of those just below benchmark. Others utilized a combination approach that worked with both groups simultaneously.

- The size of intervention groups was a concern at some schools. Although targeted interventions for intensive students should be delivered to groups of six (preferably fewer), in 34 percent of schools, groups were larger, sometimes much larger. Again, staffing shortages were cited as the most common reason for these large group sizes.

Leadership

The role of leadership at all levels has expanded in order to achieve the goals of Reading First. The position of the LEA in implementing Reading First has increased over the past three years; many districts are now expected to provide a wide range of supports to their Reading First schools. Reading First also expects principals to do more than manage their buildings; in addition, principals should provide instructional leadership in order to assure that teachers are providing the highest level of reading instruction to students. Furthermore, reading coaches and teachers on Reading Leadership Teams are expected to play leadership roles in the implementation of Reading First. Increasingly, all of these groups have been encouraged to plan for the longer-term sustainability of structures and practices.

Role of LEA, Principal and Reading Coach

- Overall, LEA Reading First coordinators and principals agreed on the duties and level of support provided to the schools from the LEA. Principals reported that they were mostly satisfied with their LEA's level of support for Reading First, although most also believed there was room for improvement. A near 70 percent majority of the representatives expressed that the grant had greatly influenced the non-Reading First schools but a few districts reported tension with their non-Reading First schools.

- The principal was clearly viewed as instructional leader and visible advocate of reading by both the teachers and coaches. Nearly all of the principals were performing the essential elements of the grant including collecting DIBELS data into the data management system, attending grade-level and Reading Leadership Team meetings, and providing a master schedule that protected a minimum of 90 uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction.

- Almost all of the principals reported feeling more comfortable observing teachers this year than last. However, according to both principals themselves and teachers, principals were failing to meet the expectation of getting in the classroom for observations and feedback at least once a month.

- Reading coaches felt more secure this year in thinking teachers understood their role in the school. And indeed, the majority of teachers in focus groups singled out the coach as the leading factor for improving their instruction. Unfortunately, the coaches reported they were significantly short on spending the required 80 percent of their time in the classroom.

Teacher Collaboration and Buy-in

- According to the vast majority of all principals, coaches and teachers, the Reading First grant fostered and built a more collaborative culture in their schools. At the same time, the groups varied widely with most principals but less than half of the teachers believing that the Reading Leadership Team meetings were a good use of time. Further, both principals and coaches were not sure that Reading First would not run smoothly *without* the team meetings.

- Buy-in of principals and coaches who support Reading First's instructional changes remained high this year (over 90 percent). But this remained an issue with teachers with half of them still indicating they do not support the changes that are occurring under Reading First.

- Both the principals and coaches reported that there was less teacher resistance this year. However, teachers were still not satisfied with some aspects of Reading First: only 13 percent of teachers felt they had a say in the decision process; they reported receiving mixed-messages, and the number of teachers who believed Reading First was taking away from other subjects doubled from last year.

Sustainability

- School administrators knew they faced significantly reduced funding for the next year. Only about half of them had some kind of sustainability plan in place by spring 2006, and felt they needed more help with planning sustainability than they had received from the state.

- Almost all of the principals indicated they would continue the essential components of the grant into the next year. State reading specialists and principals agreed that keeping a coach, on-going professional development for teachers, and a comprehensive intervention system were crucial to the continued success of Reading First schools.

- On a positive note, the large majority of teachers (90%) reported that they would not return to the way they used to teach, even after their school was no longer funded by Reading First. In addition, over half of the teachers felt that collaboration and planning meetings would also continue beyond the Reading First grant.

Professional Development

An enormous component of Reading First is the on-going professional development in reading – and in school change – provided to districts, state reading specialists, principals, coaches and teachers. Some of it is provided directly by the state, in the form of conferences and/or coach and principal meetings. Other pieces are provided by the districts or the state reading specialists to participating schools. Within buildings, coaches are important providers of the professional development most closely connected to teachers' daily instructional practices. Some schools also receive training from the publisher of their selected core reading program.

Training/Technical Assistance from the State

- Overall, principals, coaches and assessment coordinators remained pleased with the state provided trainings as to their quality presentations, quality of instructional leadership or coaching, and generally with the amount of training received. While over three-fifths of the principals felt the state training had provided them with useful tools for working with resistant staff, in contrast, only 46 percent of coaches felt the same way.

- Despite the generally positive reviews of state-provided professional development, there were some specific areas where the state trainings fell short:
  - Many principals noted that some of the trainings they received had a great deal of redundancy and did not have enough differentiation to take into account the different schools and the different individuals' prior knowledge.
  - Likewise, some coaches also felt that the trainings were not appropriately differentiated to take into consideration the levels of experience and previous knowledge and were too repetitive. There were fewer complaints from coaches than from principals, however.

- Over 70 percent of teachers believed that the Summer Academy provided them with instructional strategies they used in their classrooms.

- Although most principals were positive about the technical assistance they received from the state, a few principals remained unhappy stating that it was not specific enough to meet the needs of the school. Indeed, while close to 70 percent of principals agreed that the state was responsive to their school's needs, only 46 of the coaches felt the same way.

- The ADE Reading First Office and WestEd staff provided additional technical support and assistance in implementing scientifically research based instructional practices to 19 schools, identified as "Tier 1" schools by their lower levels of performance in 2004-2005. Although it had been anticipated that with additional technical assistance the Tier 1 schools would end the year on par with their peers, in fact this did not occur. Using the effectiveness rating as a comparison measure (the percent of students that schools either maintained at benchmark or moved up to benchmark over the year), the evaluation found that Arizona Reading First schools had an average effectiveness rating of 70 percent, but Tier 1 schools had an average of 64 percent; within the Tier 1 group only six of the 19 schools surpassed the overall group average of 70 percent.

School-Level Trainings/Technical Assistance

- The majority of principals, coaches and district coordinators believed the state reading specialists were a major asset in the implementation of Reading First; over 84 percent of the principals agreed that the state reading specialists were valuable, trusted and understood the school's culture. Similarly, almost nine out of ten coaches' and principals' interview comments were highly positive about the services provided by the state reading specialists. Their relationship was described as responsive, supportive, and helpful in working with teachers and answering questions.

- Almost half of the state reading specialists reported they were able to spend time fulfilling their role as reading specialists. Most of the state reading specialists' time was spent working with the reading coach.

- Trainings from coaches received consistently high ratings from teachers; about 75 percent or more of teachers reported that the various forms of assistance from the coach were usually or always helpful. However, only about 40 percent of teachers reported that the coach observed them at least twice a month, which was the amount of time suggested by ADE. For the most

part, when the teachers were observed, the coach did provide specific and constructive feedback on their instruction (37%).

- More than half of the coaches reported that the teachers did not receive training from the publisher of their core-reading program. Of those who received training, there were mixed responses about the helpfulness of the trainings.

Use of Assessment Data

Finally, the use of data is a central component of Reading First. Rather than simply instruct all students in the same way, Reading First advocates the frequent assessment of students and to use the results to tailor instruction to student needs. Data are also to be used to monitor the success of interventions and to identify gaps or problems in the instructional program. Schools are expected to use both the DIBELS assessments and assessments included in the core reading program.

- Reading First schools continued to report using data frequently and for multiple purposes. This year, there was even greater evidence than last year that schools have organized data systems in place for administering, analyzing, and using data.

- Further, there was an increase in principals, coaches, and teachers using data for multiple purposes, including identifying, placing, and monitoring interventions, grouping students within their classrooms, communicating about students and looking at school-wide trends.

- Most schools felt confident that their administration and scoring of the DIBELS was accurate; many of these schools described multiple training opportunities locally and/or from the state. Only a few schools still had concerns that the assessment administration was not consistent or correct.

Key Recommendations

- The examination of student assessment results shows the need to pay particular attention to what happened at first grade, where fewer students were at benchmark at the end of the year than at the beginning. Review school-level data, and for schools that experienced this drop, encourage the state reading specialists to work with the principal, coach, Reading Leadership Teams (RLTs) and/or first-grade grade-level teams to work together to identify possible causes of the drop. This might include, for example, pacing in the core program, insufficient fluency practice, or a need for more interventions for first-grade students; reasons may or may not be similar across schools.

- Continue and increase professional development opportunities that cover strategies to boost student engagement, enhance teachers' use of explicit modeling, and help teachers make informed decisions about appropriate modifications depending on student responses in the classroom. Because not all teachers need assistance in these all areas, continue current trainings and build a differentiated range of offerings. It might be helpful to work with coaches so that they can identify key professional needs of teachers and either provide for them, or help refer teachers to appropriate LEA- or state-provided professional development.

- Teachers valued and utilized opportunities for professional collaboration with their colleagues. As cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools see reduced Reading First funding in the coming year, assist them in finding the resources to make continued collaboration possible.

- Work with schools to ensure that principals, coaches, and teachers understand the needs of English language learners. The newly released report of the National Literacy Panel provides a great deal of information about the transfer of skills across languages, for example, that could assist teachers in working with students.

- Encourage state reading specialists to work with schools individually to look for time and resources to provide interventions to as many eligible students as possible. Perhaps at a coach or principals' meeting, schools that have successfully managed to provide interventions to all students could share some of their strategies with other schools.

- Reports of communication problems were substantially reduced, compared to the first year. Maintain the patterns established in the past two years of providing a consistent message and solicit feedback in order to identify and attend to misunderstandings early in the year.

- Be explicit in communication with principals, coaches, and teachers so they understand the role of the Reading Leadership Team in setting and monitoring school reading goals. If Reading Leadership Teams are to continue in a meaningful way, their role must clear so teachers do not feel shut out. Since direct communication between the ADE and teachers occurs only a few times per year, coaches and principals will need to communicate messages about the Reading Leadership Team, and other forms of teacher involvement in Reading First. Perhaps state reading specialists can help ensure good communication about the value of collaborative planning and implementation and the role of the Reading Leadership Team and help assure that such school-level collaboration really takes place.

- Continue to advance the LEAs support for Reading First in the schools. The LEA role in providing professional development is crucial, and especially with the decreasing funds for the cohort 1 and 2 schools. ADE should work with LEAs to expand provision of trainings and technical assistance that are aligned with Reading First to all LEA schools, as well as facilitation of district-wide meetings for principals, coaches and teachers. LEAs can also work to align their curricula and district requirements to more easily accommodate the Reading First model.

- Work with coaches and principals to remove obstacles to conducting observations and providing feedback. The obstacles and solutions will most likely be different for coaches and for principals, and may also differ across schools. Thus this is probably a productive area for state reading specialists, LEA coordinators, and schools to strategize together. For coaches, making more time to be in the classroom may mean relinquishing other tasks that take up substantial portions of time. Specifically, the elimination of the assessment coordinator role should not lead to an increase in the amount of time coaches spend on data, which will only make it more difficult for them to work individually with teachers on their instruction. For some principals, particularly new ones, knowledge about reading instruction and/or experience conducting observations may be the issue; in such cases, it is very helpful for principals to observe other principals conducting walk-throughs. For other principals, competing demands in their buildings make it difficult to regularly protect time for this work; in such cases, the state, LEA and principal will need to devise more individualized solutions. It would be helpful for state reading specialists to work together to think of ways to help leaders meet these expectations.

- Build professional development and technical assistance for new principals and coaches into routine planning for Reading First, both at the state and district level. Encourage LEAs to develop a plan to orient and support new leaders at their Reading First schools as part of their larger sustainability plan.

CHAPTER II
INTRODUCTION

This is the Annual Evaluation Report for Arizona Reading First for 2005-2006. It presents an integrated overview of findings, analyses and discussion for all of the 2005-2006 data.

Overview of Arizona Reading First

The Arizona Department of Education was awarded a federal Reading First grant to improve primary reading instruction and ensure that all students can read at grade level by the end of third grade. In 2002-2003, ADE went through an application process and adding staff to support the project. In 2003-2004, the program was implemented in kindergarten through third grades in the 63 Arizona schools (cohort 1) that were awarded Reading First subgrants. In 2004-2005, nine additional schools (cohort 2) were added to the Reading First program. The 72 schools continued into the 2005-2006 year.

Many of the second and third grade students were now in their third year of instruction under Reading First. This presents several advantages. Students, teachers, principals, coaches, and assessment coordinators had more knowledge about the new type of instruction, core curriculum, and DIBELS test. They had more knowledge of the expectations regarding the curriculum and feedback, and familiarity with the test and test taking. This 'third-year' knowledge was also examined in this report. These DIBELS data were analyzed and 'matched' to follow only those students who stayed in the program over the three years, as compared to students who entered new during the third year. This report does not cover three-year trends in all categories.

Further, in the third year, there was an increased knowledge base and thus comfort level with the overall expectations, as well as with the curriculum, the tests, additional interventions, use of data for decision-making and emphasis on moving students toward benchmark were emphasized. Various analyses within this report point to findings of changes for students and teachers based upon their third year with the Reading First program.

Also during this year, ADE completed an application process through which these schools applied for continuing, albeit less, funding for the following year. Most schools choose to apply for those funds. As well, an entire new group of schools applied for funds to begin a three-year cycle of Reading First implementation. The evaluation will follow all of these schools in the years to come.

Evaluation of Arizona Reading First

The Arizona Prevention Resource Center (APRC) at Arizona State University serves as the external evaluators for the Arizona Reading First project. Additional evaluation team members are with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in Portland, Oregon, as part of a subcontract to aid in the evaluation.

In this Annual Report, the analyses of the data results are ***across*** the individual studies in order to present a complete picture of the Reading First activities and findings. These studies included site visits with interviews and observations, surveys, and focus groups (see detailed explanation in Chapter 3, Methodology). Purposefully, many of the individual data items from these instruments also "cross-over" and provide insight to more than one of the research questions. This mixed-methods approach using the integration of instruments with similar items was undertaken in order to help with issues of reliability and validity: how consistent were respondents when asked about the same item in several ways, and were the appropriate, meaningful questions being asked that would answer the specific and overall research questions. When discussing the findings, the researchers took care to examine the various items that sought to answer the same question.

This year's quarterly reports summarized and presented the information as it was collected and analyzed during the year by instrument. These reports included data that were collected, as well as some data from previous quarters/years that were comparable to data collected in that quarter as a means of comparison. Since the quarterly reports contained all of the individual data, not all of these data were replicated in this Annual Report.

Rather this report seeks to bring together those data that are most insightful in presenting an integrated and overall analysis of Reading First activities and provide some conclusions in order to address the five specific research questions the evaluation seeks to answer:

1. Professional Development: Knowledge Transfer to Teachers
   A) How effective was the professional development approach in helping teachers acquire knowledge and skills about phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension, -- and transfer the knowledge and skills to their classroom instruction?
   B) Knowledge Transfer to Trainers and Support Staff

2. Transfer of Knowledge in the Classroom - Instruction
   To what extent are teachers incorporating reading assessments into their classrooms and using the results of the assessment to change their instructional approaches and address students' learning needs? How effective was the professional development approach in helping teachers transfer the knowledge and skills to their classroom instruction?

3. Knowledge Transfer to Students- Assessments
   How effective was Arizona's Reading First Initiative in increasing students' knowledge and abilities related to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension as measured by the DIBELS assessment?

4. Knowledge Transfer to Students - Assessments
   How well are grades second and third students meeting the standards for performance in reading as measured by the AIMS, the State Assessment, and to what extent is performance improving overtime?

5. Capacity Building: Support Systems of Leadership and Sustainability
   How effective is the system of support for schools and districts to help all key stakeholders to contribute to the improvement of students' reading performance and sustain improved performance over time?
   A) Capacity Building: Support System - How effective is the system's capacity building and support for schools seeking to improve students' reading performance?
   B) Leadership Development - To what extent did the Reading First Initiative help to develop reading instructional leadership capacity in coaches, specialists, and principals?

Thus, the findings presented are organized by chapters according to these research question topics: Assessment Test Scores (DIBELS, AIMS, Stanford 9/TerraNova), Instruction, Leadership, Sustainability, Professional Development and Assessment System. While chapter findings were integrated across studies and research questions, the conclusions further bring together the major themes and assessment issues that are the essence of this report.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Overview

A multi-method strategy was used to evaluate the Reading First project outcomes and processes. This chapter discusses the many data collection instruments and their administration procedures.

In order to address both the evaluation questions and to document achievements and challenges in Reading First, evaluators utilized a number of different methodologies and instruments to collect a large amount of information. Whenever possible, evaluators gathered data from more than one source (such as from principals as well as teachers) and/or from more than one instrument (interviews as well as surveys), in order to triangulate and integrate the findings to examine activities from more than one point of view.

The DIBELS, AIMS, AIMS-DPA and TerraNova reading scores were used to assess the desired outcome of improvement in student reading achievement. Results from the many other data collection instruments were used to address the implementation, process, throughputs and system improvements. The assessment focused on the "four pillars" of Reading First: professional development, leadership, assessment systems, and instruction.

The following instruments, discussed in this chapter were used during this year's evaluation:

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test scores
- AIMS, AIMS-DPA and TerraNova reading scores
- Surveys (spring surveys): These instruments contained questions on attitudes and behaviors related to professional development, leadership, assessment, instructional practices, and experiences with Reading First. Teachers, assessment coordinators, coaches and principals completed these surveys.
- Implementation Checklist: Completed by the State Reading Specialists, these 56+ item instruments assessed progress of implementation of Reading First in the districts, schools and classrooms.
- Site visits – observations and interviews: These observations, interviews, and visits followed protocols in order to make judgments across sites as to what was occurring at the school and classroom level with administrators, teachers and students.
- Survey and focus group of State Reading Specialists (SRS): The questions were designed to quantify and qualify the experiences of the SRSs in their work during this year.
- County superintendents and LEA Reading First program/ professional development specialists surveys: These surveys were to examine the role of the SRS as part of the County administration.

The remainder of this chapter describes each of these instruments in detail, as well as the response rates obtained and any limitations or cautions about the data collected via one of the instruments.

DIBELS Test

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills (http://reading.uoregon.edu).

The results are being used to assess individual student progress as well as grade-level, school-level and project level measures of the overall student outcome of improved reading test scores.

The DIBELS measures individually assess three of the five Big Ideas of early literacy as well as examining risk factors:

- Measure of Risk:
    - Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) Assesses a child's ability to name as many letters as they can to determine if they are at risk for difficulty achieving early literacy benchmark goals
- Measures of Phonological Awareness:
    - Initial Sounds Fluency (ISF): Assesses a child's skill to identify and produce the initial sound of a given word.
    - Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF): Assesses a child's skill to produce the individual sounds within a given word.
- Measure of Alphabetic Principle:
    - Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF): Assesses a child's knowledge of letter-sound correspondences as well their ability to blend letters together to form unfamiliar "nonsense" (e.g., fik, lig, etc.) words.
- Measure of Fluency with Connected Text:
    - Oral Reading Fluency (ORF): Assesses a child's skill of reading connected text in grade-level material word.

Students are assessed with these various measures that are then combined to categorize students based on their scores. Students are either "at risk," "some risk," or "low risk." This categorization becomes the basis for the instructional support recommendation (ISR) that classifies students as either "intensive," strategic" or "benchmark" in terms of their overall performance.

DIBELS as Assessment Tool

This test is viewed as a valid and reliable indicator of early literacy development and predictive of later reading proficiency. It is able to identify students who are not progressing as expected. The result of DIBELS testing can also be used to evaluate individual student development and provide grade-level feedback on instructional objectives.

Cohort and Comparison Groups

Specifically, the data for each group were downloaded to ***match*** students who had taken the test both the beginning of the year (fall) and at the end of the year (spring). Although only students who were ***matched*** (had both pre and post test scores) were used in this sample, the number of students per individual test varied from test to test, and from pre to post test. The middle of year test administration was not considered (if a student took the beginning and end of year test but missed the middle of year, the student was included in this database).

An initial group of 63 schools, designated as Cohort 1, began in Reading First, and continued for all three of the years reported: 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06. In 2004-2005, an additional nine schools were added and this group has been reported as Cohort 2. As a note, one of the cohort 2 schools did not have beginning of the year DIBELS data in 2004-05; the cohort 2 schools were not selected until after the start of the school year. In 2005-2006, cohort 2 data were reported for all nine schools.

The evaluation of the Reading First Initiative called for a pre and posttest comparison group design for 2003-2004. For 2003-2004, two groups of comparison schools were used: a pre-post group of eight schools and a post-only group of eight schools. Due to changes in ADE policies that negated the ability for a post-only group after the first year (explained in earlier reports), 12 schools comprised the one pre-post comparison group for 2004-05. This was minus the one school that administered DIBELS but became a Reading First school, and three schools that did not administer DIBELS at the beginning and end of the year. For 2005-2006, 11 schools comprised the Comparison Group.

Table 3-1 lists the comparison schools that provided yearlong data for the last three years, including information about whether or not these schools were located in LEAs that had Reading First grants at other schools.

Table 3-1
Comparison Schools List

#	RF LEA	LEA Name	Comparison School Name	2003-04 Yearlong Data	2004-05 Yearlong Data	2005-06 Yearlong Data
1	Yes	Alhambra	Granada Primary	Yes	--	--
2	--	Murphy	Alfred F. Garcia	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Roosevelt	Ed & Verna Pastor	Yes	**	**
4	Yes	Roosevelt	Martin Luther King Jr.	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	--	Bullhead City	Coyote Canyon*	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	--	Holbrook	Park (K-2) & Hulet (3)	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Yes	Pendergast	Desert Horizon	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	--	Hyder	Dateland	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	--	Buckeye	Buckeye	Post only	Yes	Yes
10	--	Mohave Valley	Mohave Valley	Post only	Yes	Yes
11	Yes	Mesa	Longfellow	Post only	--	--
12	--	Picacho	Picacho	Post only	Yes	Yes
13	--	Phoenix	Paul Laurence Dunbar	Post only	--	
14	--	Toltec	Toltec	Post only	Yes	Yes
15	--	Ft. Thomas Unf	Ft Thomas	Post only	Yes	--
16	Yes	Yuma	O.C. Johnson	Post only	Yes	Yes

* Note: These schools did not report data for Grade 3.
**Note: Became a Reading First school in cohort 2

DIBELS Test Administration, Data Collection and Cleaning Methods

DIBELS scores were captured in the DIBELS database maintained by the University of Oregon. The data were farmed/downloaded from the DIBELS website by grade level for each of the three groups: Reading First cohort 1, Reading First cohort 2, and the Comparison group. The downloaded data included names and IDs for the district, school, student and classroom, as well as demographic information on the student. The individual test scores were also part of the downloaded data-sets. Table 3-2 shows the total number of students in each grade level by group for the 2005-2006 year.

Table 3-2
Number of Students per Group per Grade Level

2005-2006 Group	Kindergarten	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade
Reading First cohort 1	5,824	5,768	5,527	5,567
Reading First cohort 2	632	654	588	576
Comparison Group	945	1,012	979	688

Analysis by Grade Level

DIBELS Measures

The data set, when downloaded, included the raw scores for each of the test measures. Descriptive statistics were reported for all the test measures. These included the number of valid and missing cases, mean, standard deviation, median, quartiles, minimum, and maximum score for each measure.

DIBELS Categories

Once downloaded, the raw score data were then recoded into new variables to reflect the "at risk," "some risk," or "low risk" categories. These categories help to monitor students' progress. The raw scores for each measure have been set into these categories based upon validation and reliability studies performed at the University of Oregon. These categories can help teachers individualize instruction based upon the measure and clustering of students into the categories, basically by setting cut points for grouping the raw scores. These performance scores for each measure change for each testing period (beginning, middle or end of year) as to what scores qualify a student to be in each of the at risk, some risk or low risk categories. For the categories, frequencies and percentages were calculated.

DIBELS Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR)

The ISR is an overall classification of several of the individual measures and shows a student's progress overall in reading achievement. The goal is to be at benchmark, and has become an established reader (which actually means something similar to reading at grade level). Scoring at intensive or strategic defines the amount of work to be achieved, and viewing the individual measures can show the specific skills in which the student needs help.

The ISR for combines category scores (for example, 1 = at risk, 2 = some risk, and 3 = low risk) for each of the appropriate, specified measures for beginning and end of the year. This results in many possible combinations for the beginning and end of the year. Each possible combination is then given a classification rating of intensive, strategic or benchmark.

The ISR classifications are reported along with the numbers of students in each category at the beginning and end of the year, as well as the percent of students. Also shown is the difference between the beginning and end scores. Students in the four groups are shown: for 2005-2006 cohort 1, cohort 2 and the comparison group, and the 2004-2005 cohort 1 group.

For the intensive category, it is a positive development that the difference is a negative number meaning that the percentage of students in this category is less at the end of the year than at the beginning of the year; the same would be true for the strategic category. For the benchmark category, large gains are positive, although the hope is always that such a large percent of students would start out in this category (for example, over 90 percent) that the gain to achieve 100 percent at benchmark would actually be small.

DIBELS Adequate Yearly Progress - Effectiveness

Another key concern is the number and percentage of students who continue to gain throughout the year. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a measure of the students who were at intensive, strategic or benchmark at the beginning of the year who ended the year in a higher classification (intensive to strategic; or intensive, strategic and benchmark to benchmark).

> *AYP = (percent of intensive students who moved up to strategic) + (percent of intensive students who moved up to benchmark) + (percent of strategic students who moved up to benchmark) + (percent of benchmark students who stayed at benchmark)*

This was calculated in two ways. The first measure was of the percent who moved to benchmark of students from within each ISR category (intensive = 100%, strategic = 100% and benchmark = 100%). It is a measure of the percent of students who were intensive or strategic or benchmark at the beginning of the year that made adequate progress by the end of the year.

The second AYP measure is for the total 100 percent of all the students from across all the ISR categories, what percent achieved AYP (intensive + strategic + benchmark = 100%). It is a measure of the total students (with beginning and end data) who made adequate progress.

Both sets of these data are reported by the categories from which and into which the students moved (e.g. from intensive at beginning to benchmark at end). These percentages were derived by performing a crosstab of the beginning of year ISR variable with the end of year ISR variable and reporting the percentages for the appropriate row or column percent, as well as the total percent.

In addition, for the total group, an Effectiveness Rate was calculated, which was the sum of the percent improvement for each of the four possible improvement groupings.

Limitations

When comparing across groups, a word of caution is advised. These groups were matched based upon school and demographic characteristics. However, there is the possibility of some "spillover" effect of Reading First, especially within those schools in Reading First districts and also from the AZ Reads program. LEAs have been encouraged to share professional development and other activities to improve reading. The 90 minute reading block and use of core curricula have been emphasized for three years now in Arizona.

Further, there is always the test-retest issue that once students take a test, or teachers give a test, there is the possibility of improvement on the post-test just because the student remembers questions/answers, and/or because teachers begin to teach to the test. However, with DIBELS, there might be a little but not much test/retest problem with validity because 1) students do not always take the same measure from one time to the next (for example, ISF drops out, NWF is added in) and 2) the texts for the ORF change over the year. The degree to which teachers teach to the test was a question that was explored in the interviews conducted at the site visit schools and presented in this report. Also, many of these students were now in their second year of Reading First and had developed familiarity with some of the tests as well as with test-taking procedures, factors which have been known to have a positive influence on test scores.

There are also other factors crucial to the examination of differences, which have to do with the size of the sample and population. In this study, both the Reading First schools and the comparison school groups comprise the entire population (not a sample). Further, with a number over 5,000 for the Reading First populations, there is the greater probability that findings will be significant.

AIMS and TerraNova/Stanford 9 Data

Overview

For the purpose of this evaluation, the Arizona Instrument to Measure Success (AIMS) assessment and Stanford 9/TerraNova test scores were used as additional measures to examine how well K-3 Arizona students are doing towards meeting the standards for performance in reading.

Changes to the state of Arizona policy by the State Board of Education affected the standardized testing in the state for 2004-2005. The decision was made that there were too many tests, and that standardized testing would be consolidated. Therefore, the AIMS DPA – Dual Purpose Assessment Test – was developed. Some questions on this test measure the Arizona academic standards and thus are analyzed as part of the AIMS results. Other questions on AIMS DPA are national norm-referenced measures that would be found on the TerraNova test. Some of the questions overlap and apply to both tests.

Effective for the school year 2004-2005, the TerraNova has replaced the Stanford 9 (SAT9) in grades two and nine. For grades 3 - 8, norm-referenced (NRT) scores are taken from the AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA). The AIMS DPA provides a norm-referenced test score (NRT) and an AIMS score. The results of the tests are used by classroom teachers to guide instruction and improve student learning. The NRT compares a child's performance on certain test items to the performance of students nationwide by way of a percentile ranking. The AIMS score assesses a child's knowledge of the Arizona State Standards.

> AIMS DPA is the result of many years of intense effort and collaboration among teachers, administrators, and the Arizona Department of Education. Arizona students in Grades 3 through 8 are tested using the Dual Purpose Assessment (DPA). This

> assessment measures the students' level of proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics and provides students' national percentile rankings in reading, language, and mathematics. AIMS DPA combines 20 to 30 Norm Referenced Test (NRT) items with AIMS standards-based items into one test form. AIMS DPA provides separate NRT and AIMS scores while reducing the total number of items by approximately 40 percent. (*Grades 3-8 Guide to Test Interpretation: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards AIMS DPA, spring 2005,* p. 1)

The AIMS, AIMS DPA and TerraNova data were extracted from databases provided to APRC by the Office of Research and Evaluation, Arizona Department of Education. All Reading First and state of Arizona analyses were performed using the databases provided. The all Arizona students category contains the students in the Reading First and Comparison groups.

In addition, some other sources of Arizona or RF data, such as totals from the past year's reports, were also used in this analysis this year, but not in previous years. Thus, it is possible that the figures reported in this report may not "match" to those previously reported.

Some of the databases provided to APRC contained information on each individual student. APRC signed a confidentiality agreement with ADE to secure these data. Data were extracted for only the reading tests, then the databases coded to reflect the status of the school as a Reading First cohort 1 or cohort 2 school or comparison school. For 2003 and 2004, the 16 comparison schools were used; for 2005 and 2006, the group of 15 comparison schools was used (minus the one that became a Reading First school). The data were then analyzed using descriptives and crosstabs to compare the relevant scores across the groups.

In 2003 the AIMS and Stanford 9 scores should be viewed as baseline scores, as this was before the implementation of Reading First in 2003-2004. Further, the scoring on the AIMS test was rescaled between 2004 and 2005.

Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)

The AIMS test is a standards-based test which provides information regarding the progress of Arizona's students toward mastering Arizona's reading, writing, and mathematics standards. It is a criterion-referenced assessment. The AIMS test shows how well students are mastering leaning goals and how they compare with other children statewide.

The test consists of a combination of multiple-choice, short answers, and essay items.
The following content areas are covered in AIMS DPA Reading:

> Excerpts from published literature are the basis for evaluating students' reading skills. As students read fiction and nonfiction passages, interviews, editorials, and articles, they answer questions assessing skills such as reading comprehension, identification of support for main ideas, application of multi-step directions, ability to make and support assertions, and analysis and evaluation of themes. Multiple-choice questions target specific skills. (*Grades 3-8 Guide to Test Interpretation: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards AIMS DPA, spring 2005,* p. 2)

The standards for the third grade AIMS Reading test scale scores are given below. They were changed in 2005 when the AIMS test was changed to accommodate the AIMS DPA format. The changes made impact the scale scores by category. For example, the "approaches" category now includes students in the lower 35 percent compared to in 2004 including students in the lower 51 percent. The same is true for students in the "meets" category who can now fall at the 61 percent rank rather than at the 70 percent rank.

Table 3-3
Third Grade AIMS 2003 and 2004 Reading Performance Level Scale Scores

	2003			2004		
	Scale Score	**Raw Score**	**%**	**Scale Score**	**Raw Score**	**%**
Falls Far Behind	300-473	0-23	--	300-473	0-21	--
Approaches	474-499	24-31	56%	474-499	22-29	51%
Meets Standard	500-546	32-39	74%	500-546	30-38	70%
Exceed Standard	547-700	40-43	93%	547-700	39-43	91%

Table 3-4
Third Grade AIMS 2005 and 2006 Reading Performance Level Scale Scores

	2005			2006		
	Scale Score	**Raw Score**	**%**	**Scale Score**	**Raw Score**	**%**
Falls Far Behind	200-378	0-18	--	300-378	0-19	--
Approaches	379-430	19-32	35%	379-430	20-33	--
Meets Standard	431-515	33-48	61%	431-515	34-48	--
Exceed Standard	516-640	49-54	91%	516-640	49-54	--

When scores are shown for all Arizona schools, the Reading First and Comparison groups were included in the totals. The data were analyzed to look at changes across years in the four categories: "falls far behind," approaches," "meets standard," and "exceeds standard." Data were further examined to look at differences between years for the same group and differences between groups for the same year.

Table 3-5
Third Grade AIMS Reading Test – Number of Students

3rd Grade	2003	2004	2005	2006
Reading First cohort 1	N=6,430	N=6,476	N=6,469	N=6,449
Reading First cohort 2	---	---	N=787	N=652
RF Comparison Group	N=1,486	N=1,367	N=1,362	N=1,192
All Arizona Schools	N=75,540	N=77,014	N=80,181	N=64,925

TerraNova - Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9)

In 2005 and 2006, the norm-referenced test items for Arizona students were included in the AIMS DPA test. Before 2005, the Stanford 9 was used as the standardized, norm-referenced test that was given to all students in Arizona in grades 2 through 9. The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 9 or Stanford 9) is a timed, norm-referenced, multiple-choice test.

TerraNova and Stanford 9 scores are reported as percentile and stanine scores. The percentile score places the student in comparison to the national norm group. Average national percentile scores are from 25 – 75. The stanine score divides the norm population into 9 groups (1 low to 9 high). The student is then ranked by this score according to the group norm. Thus, if the school score is 39, it means that the average student at this school scored better than 39% of the students in the 1995 norming group. Schools with ranks reported near the 50th percentile indicate that the typical student performance on the test is about average when compared with other students of the same grade level. Higher percentile ranks reflect better performance. Stanine scores of 4, 5 and 6 are considered average.

The Reading First schools and the Comparison group of sixteen schools were sorted from this data-download of all schools. When scores are shown for all Arizona schools, the Reading First and Comparison groups were included in the totals. Data were examined to look at differences between years for the same group and differences between groups for the same year.

Table 3-6
Second Grade Stanford 9 and TerraNova Scores

	2003 Stanford 9 +	2004 Stanford 9	2005 TerraNova	2006 TerraNova
Reading First cohort 1	N=6,237	N=6,540	N=6,643	N=7,892
Reading First cohort 2	--	--	N=751	N=679
All Arizona Schools	N=74,326	N=77,175	N=78,455	N=79,868

Table 3-7
Third Grade Stanford 9 and AIMS DPA/TerraNova Scores

	2003 Stanford 9+	2004 Stanford 9	2005 TerraNova	2006 TerraNova
Reading First cohort 1	N=6,411	N=6,319	N=6,427	N=6,394
Reading First cohort 2	--	--	N=786	N=653
All Arizona Schools	N=77,259	N=76,654	N=79,717	N=79,948

Surveys of Teachers, Assessment Coordinators, Coaches and Principals

In spring 2006, surveys were administered to school staff members involved in Reading First. The surveys were designed to gather information on school and classroom practices, perceptions of Reading First, and its impact during the 2005-2006 year of implementation. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (76 items)
- Reading coach survey (137 items)
- Assessment coordinator survey (51 items)
- Teacher survey for staff who taught K-3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (117 items)

To design the 2006 surveys, evaluators began by reviewing survey items from the previous year, items from other states evaluated by NWREL, and research related to the four pillars of Reading First. Evaluators made major changes to the previous Arizona surveys based on this review process as well as their 2005 analysis experience and an increased understanding of the Reading First program and vision. The final surveys contained close-ended questions about areas related to grant implementation including assessments, use of the core program, student grouping, collaboration, professional development, and beliefs and attitudes about Reading First.

All surveys were mailed to the reading coach at each school with explicit instructions for administration. To improve response rates, coaches were encouraged to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid and honest in their answers and assured respondents' anonymity. To further encourage honest responses, each respondent was given a confidentiality envelope to seal before returning the survey. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coach, who mailed them back to NWREL within a specified timeframe. E-mail and telephone reminders were made to encourage schools to respond and surveys were accepted up to three weeks late.

NWREL received surveys from 65 of the 73 schools; an 89% response rate. These included surveys from 1,179 of 1,567 teachers, 65 coaches, 63 assessment coordinators, and 62 principals.

Six schools (Challenger, Desert View, Mitchell, Roberts, Sierra Vista, Valle Del Encanto) did not return any surveys.

The majority of teacher respondents were regular classroom teachers (92%); additional teacher respondents included language arts/reading (5%), special education (3%), and bilingual (1%). Regardless of position, respondents are referred to as "teachers" unless otherwise noted.

Implementation Checklists

The State Reading Specialists - SRS (formerly known as the County Reading Specialists – CRS) continued to be responsible for the Implementation Checklist.

In 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, the survey questions and answers were changed several times to more carefully reflect the actual discussed implementation steps. Also, in 2004-2005, concerns over the reliability/consistency of ratings led to the decision that two SRS raters would visit each school and each complete an individual checklist.

There were some additional exceptions implemented during the 2004-2005 school year that made comparisons difficult. The decision was made by ADE that the 12 schools identified as Tier 1 Technical Assistance Intervention schools would not be included in the group assessed by the SRS with the checklist. Further, the nine schools added to the Reading First project for the 2004-2005 school year were not assessed during fall 2004.

In 2005-2006, only the assigned SRS completed the Implementation Checklist for each schools which was a big difference from last year where two Implementation Checklists were received from each of the Reading First schools. The decision to ask only the assigned SRS to do this was made after checking the reliability (consistency) with which the two SRS responded; with over 90 percent of responses replicated between the two responders, it was decided that only the assigned SRS would complete the checklist.

For this year, the questions and responses remained the same as for 2004-2005. On the fall 2005 Implementation Checklists, the SRSs provided ratings of each school's level of implementation for 56 items in nine broad categories. In addition to rating each item on the 4-point scale, SRSs could indicate that one or more items were, "priority recommendation for progress monitoring." The checklist directions clarified that no more than five items could be marked as "priority" since more items would be overwhelming for a school to consider.

For fall, the Implementation Checklists were due October 14, 2005. Data were scanned, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS. In total, 67 checklists were received from the 72 Reading First schools, compared to 122 checklists completed for 61 schools during the spring 2005 semester. One SRS did not return the Implementation Checklist for five Reading First Schools in two LEAs. Several attempts were made by APRC and ADE to collect the data, but the checklists were never received.

For spring, the evaluator responsible for this instrument developed a web-based application for SRS to input data directly into a form and database via the internet. This was a pilot test to determine the feasibility of web-entry and its ease of use. Specialists reported that they thought this methodology did enhance their work and recommended that it continue. It also made the data collection and analysis process smoother for the evaluators. The Checklists were due May 15; SRSs submitted Checklists for all 72 schools.

Site Visits to Selected Schools

Twenty-seven Arizona Reading First schools in 17 LEA's were visited in the spring of 2006. In the two previous years, a stratified random sampling was used to select schools; this year the 27 remained schools were visited. The structure of the visits was similar to that used in 2004 and 2005, although site visit protocols were somewhat revised for 2006 to reflect program changes and data collection needs.

Although a team of evaluators shared in the work of the site visits, each school was visited by a single evaluator. In order to ensure common understandings of the instruments and to enhance reliability, a two-day training for all site visitors took place in March 2006.

Prior to each site visit, reading coaches and/or principals were contacted to make arrangements for the visit. For each site visit, schools were asked to schedule interviews with the principal, reading coach, and assessment coordinator, a focus group comprised of K-3 teachers, observations of three reading classrooms followed by an observation of an intervention. Each of these activities is described in greater detail below.

Interviews

Interviews with the principal, reading coaches, and assessment coordinators covered a similar range of topics: the roles of each, the work of the Reading Leadership Team, the type and perceived effectiveness of professional development, support from the state, perceptions of instructional change at the school, use of assessments, as well as challenges and successes in the first year of implementation. The coach interview was somewhat longer than the principal or assessment coordinator interview.

Interview questions were deliberately open-ended which allowed respondents to answer by talking about the issues or concerns most relevant to them. Qualitative analyses focused on patterns found among respondents, rather than exact counts, because the open-ended nature of the questions allowed a range of different responses.

Interviews were not taped; instead, extensive notes were recorded and then summarized for each school. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not always verbatim, but do represent as closely as possible the actual wording of the respondents.

Focus Groups

In order to obtain the perspectives of teachers at Reading First schools, focus groups were held with K-3 teachers. Evaluators facilitated discussions of the impact of the Reading First grant on their school, and obtained perspectives on these issues: expectations, interpretation of assessment data, differentiated instruction, interaction with the coach, and aspects of the program that should be sustained after grant funding ends.

Classroom Observations

Generally in Reading First schools, reading instruction occurred throughout the primary grades during a 90-minute block of time during the school day. This meant that in most schools, evaluators only had a total of 90 minutes in which to observe as much reading instruction as possible. For this reason, evaluators visited portions of three classes, at different grade levels, for 20 to 30 minutes each, well aware that this information would provide only a "snapshot" of the instruction that occurred at the school.

Evaluators randomly selected three of the four grades to observe at each school so approximately the same number would be observed at each grade across all the schools. Site visitors then randomly selected classrooms at those grades by telling coaches they would like to visit the classes of teachers whose name fell in a certain place in the alphabet. Coaches were informed that teachers had the right to request *not* to be observed, and that in such circumstances a different class could be substituted (such substitutions were very rare).

In total, site visitors conducted 81 classroom observations, spread fairly evenly across grades: kindergarten (24%), first grade (28%), second grade (25%), and third grade (23%). The average observation was 22 minutes in length.

During the observations, the evaluators focused on the work of the teacher and, to a lesser degree, the response of the students. For example, if the teacher was working with a group of five students, and other students were working with a paraprofessional or on their own, in groups or individually, the observation focused on the small group work of the teacher. Paraprofessionals and other adults were not explicitly observed, although their presence in the classroom was noted. Evaluators took detailed notes in consecutive five-minute blocks, recording chronologically what the teacher did and how students responded. After the observation, evaluators used their notes to record the what was being taught in each five-minute block during the observation (phonics, vocabulary, etc.), and then used a rubric to rate certain characteristics of the lesson, such as its clarity, the level of student engagement, and the level of appropriate monitoring and feedback.

Site visitors met briefly with each of the observed teachers after the observation. The teachers were asked about the materials they used, how students were grouped and for clarification on any concerns that the site visitors or teachers had about the classroom observation time.

Intervention Observations

Site visitors asked to observe 20 minutes of an intervention during their school visit. If the observation was in a room with more than one adult providing interventions, the site visitors selected one adult to observe for the entire observation. They recorded information about the number of students and adults, time of the observations, and materials used, and took detailed notes documenting what happened. Clarifying questions were addressed to the intervention provider, as were two short questions about how that provider had been trained and whether s/he desired additional training.

In total, evaluators conducted 27 intervention observations at 27 different schools. While it is important to note that this comparatively small sample of intervention observations is too small to claim representativeness, it is useful in its corroboration of other data.

Observed interventions served students in the following grades, some serving students from more than one grade at a time: kindergarten (11%), first grade (30%), second grade (26%), and third grade (30%). Most interventions served intensive students (85%). Some served only strategic (3%) or only benchmark (4%); the remainder served students at all levels (4%). The average intervention observation was 19 minutes in length.

Survey and Focus Group of State Reading Specialists

This year, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) asked the Arizona Prevention Resource Center (APRC) Reading First (RF) evaluation team to examine how the position of state reading specialist (SRS) serves at the county level. The results of the surveys of the County superintendents and County professional development staff, as well as the responses from ADE staff on these questions, were presented in the Quarter 2 report.

It was decided to ask the SRS some questions on their work and relationship with the County Education Service Agency (ESA). In the past, the state reading specialists (SRS) were administered a short survey and participated in a focus group in order to solicit information from them on various aspects of Reading First implementation. This year, the questions on the County ESA were added to the survey. The survey and focus group took place on March 8, 2006. Fourteen specialists took part in the focus group and survey, and one more completed the survey via email, for a total of fifteen total survey responses.

A Preliminary Draft report with only the SRSs responses to the specific questions regarding their work and relationship with the County Education Service Agency (ESA) was presented to Reading First staff on March 28, 2006. That report and the final version also included some findings from the earlier surveys of the County and ADE staff are presented for comparison purposes. The final version contained all questions asked of the State Reading Specialists on both the survey and in the focus group and pertained to their work with the County, as well as to their roles and work throughout the year.

Survey of County Superintendents and LEA Reading First Program/ Professional Development Specialists

The purpose of the survey was to examine how the position of state reading specialist (SRS) served at the county level. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) in partnership with county superintendents set up the implementation of Arizona's AZ LEARNS and AZ READS, which included Reading First. The goal was to make services provided by ADE equitable across the state. In this development, the position of state reading specialist (formerly called county reading specialist) was created as part of the County Education Service Agency (ESA). The SRSs main responsibility to the county was that of a trainer and a collaborator on professional development matters.

From a list submitted to the evaluators by ADE, thirty-seven county personnel received surveys via email. The list encompassed all fifteen state-wide counties. There was as few as one designated person in La Paz and Greenlee, while as many as three representatives in eight other counties. The recipients included all county school superintendents, as well as deputy/associate superintendents, and various program/professional development coordinators.

A total of twenty surveys were completed and returned in which every county was represented by at least one respondent. All recipients outlined by ADE were sent the survey at least twice via email with an additional two phone calls. Approximately four recipients were never heard of while others deemed themselves too unfamiliar with the role of SRSs to complete a survey. Still others opted to send a joint survey completed collaboratively with another recipient.

ADE Reading First staff also received a similar survey that addressed how they had worked with the county personnel and Reading Specialists. Seven staff completed surveys that were then compared to the results of the county respondents.

CHAPTER IV
STUDENT ASSESSMENTS I: DIBELS TEST SCORES

This chapter focuses on an analysis of DIEBLS scores that includes comparison of several groups by grade level. Specifically it discusses the Instructional Support Recommendation categories across kindergarten, first, second and third grades for the appropriate groups:

- Reading First cohort 1 2005-2006: 63 schools that began the Reading First program in 2003-2004, participated in 2004-2005 and continued for 2005-2006;
- Reading First cohort 2 2005-2006: 9 schools that began the Reading First program in 2004-2005 (only 8 had matched DIBELS scores);
- Comparison Group 2005-2006: 11 schools that began in 2003-2004 with 12 schools;
- Reading First cohort 1 2004-2005 Continuing students: a subset of the entire 2004-2005 cohort 1 data that isolates those students who have participated in the Reading First program for both years at the same school.

The Quarter 4, 2005-2006 report discussed the specific data for each of the DIBELS measures, Adequate Yearly Progress and Effectiveness Rates by school. Not all these data were repeated in this report.

Highlights

Kindergarten

- For cohort 1, 86.1 percent of kindergarten students ended the year at benchmark. This met the ADE's goal of 75 percent of kindergarten students at benchmark by the end of the year.
  - Since only 13.0 percent of cohort 1 students started the year at benchmark, there was a positive gain of 73.1 percentage points of students moving into the benchmark category.
  - The other groups also experienced a gain from beginning to end of year in the benchmark percentages although not as much as did the cohort 1 group: cohort 2 67.3 percentage point gain, comparison group 37.6 percentage point gain and 2004-2005 64.6 percentage point gain.

First Grade

- Cohort 1 (63.9 percent) had the largest percent of first grade students at benchmark by the end of the year.
  - Cohort 1 had a -1.9 percentage point difference in students moving from benchmark at the beginning (65.8) to benchmark at the end of the year (63.9), cohort 2 had less than a percentage point change, the continuing group a 3.6 percentage point gain, the comparison group had a -10 percentage point difference.

Second Grade

- At the end of the year, cohort 1 showed half of their students at benchmark (53.5%), cohort 2 showed 58.7percent, the comparison grouped showed 36.8 percent and the continuing students showed 46.1 percent at benchmark.

Third Grade

- At the end of the year, cohort 1 showed 51.5 percent of their students at benchmark, cohort 2 showed 37.9 percent, the comparison grouped showed 36.9 percent and the continuing group showed 30.5 percent at benchmark.

DIBELS Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR)

The ISR for kindergarten combines category scores (for example, 1 = at risk, 2 = some risk, and 3 = low risk) for each of the appropriate measures (ISF and LNF for beginning of year, and LNF, PSF and NWF for end of year). This results in nine possible combinations for the beginning of the year and 27 possible combinations for the end of the year. Each possible combination is then given a classification rating of intensive, strategic or benchmark. To illustrate, one possible end of year combination would be the following: LNF = low risk, and PSF = some risk, and NWF = low risk, then the ISR = benchmark.

Table 4-1 shows the ISR classifications and the numbers and percent of students in each category at the beginning and end of the year. Students in the four groups are shown as there were no continuing students (from a lower grade) that could be included in the kindergarten analysis: 2005-2006 cohort 1, cohort 2 and the comparison group, and the 2004-2005 cohort 1 group.

- For cohort 1, 86.1 percent of kindergarten students ended the year at benchmark. This met the ADE's goal of 75 percent of kindergarten students at benchmark by the end of the year.
  - Since only 13.0 percent of cohort 1 students started the year at benchmark, there was a positive gain of 73.1 percentage points of students moving into the benchmark category.
  - The other groups are started similarly low: cohort 2 17.2 percent, comparison 14.0 percent and 2004-2005 at 11.7 percent.
  - These other groups ended the year with lesser percentages of students at benchmark than the cohort 1 group: cohort 2 84.5 percent, comparison 51.6 percent and 2004-2005 at 76.3 percent
- Strategic:
  - All four groups began the year with a range of 32% to 40% of students in the strategic category.
  - Cohort 1 ended the year with the smallest percent in strategic of the four groups at 7.1 percent, and thus saw the largest movement out of the strategic category (27.2 percentage points) of the four groups.
  - Cohort 2 ended with 8.4 percent classified as strategic, a difference of -28.2 percentage points; the 2004-2005 cohort 1 group had finished kindergarten with 11.7 percent at strategic, a difference of -20.7 percentage points.

- The comparison group had 19.3 percent of students at strategic and moved -21.0 percentage points out of strategic by year end.

- Intensive:
  - At the end of the year, only 6.7 percent of cohort 1 students were in the intensive category, whereas almost 52.7 percent had begun the year there, a difference of -46.0 percentage points. Cohort 1 had the largest movement out of intensive of the four groups.
  - The comparison groups also had begun with over forty percent in intensive; cohort 1 2004-2005 had 55.9 percent in intensive at the beginning of the year.
  - Cohort 2 ended the year with 7.1 percent still in intensive, a difference of -36.1 percentage points; cohort 1 from 2004-2005 still had 12 percent in intensive at the end of the year, a difference of -43.9 percent.
  - The comparison group ended the year with the most students still in intensive (29.1) and thus showed the least growth out of intensive (-16.6 percentage points).

Table 4-1
Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Numbers and Percentages

		Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year				Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year			
Group		**Intensive**	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**	**Total**	**Intensive**	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**	**Total**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	N	3069	1999	756	5824	393	414	5017	5824
	%	52.7%	34.3%	13.0%	100.0%	6.7%	7.1%	86.1%	100.0%
RF 05-06 cohort 2	N	273	250	109	632	45	53	534	632
	%	43.2%	39.6%	17.2%	100.0%	7.1%	8.4%	84.5%	100.0%
Compars 05-06	N	418	368	128	914	275	182	488	945
	%	45.7%	40.3%	14.0%	100.0%	29.1%	19.3%	51.6%	100.0%
RF 04-05 cohort 1	N	3213	1860	673	5746	689	674	4383	5746
	%	55.9%	32.4%	11.7%	100.0%	12.0%	11.7%	76.3%	100.0%

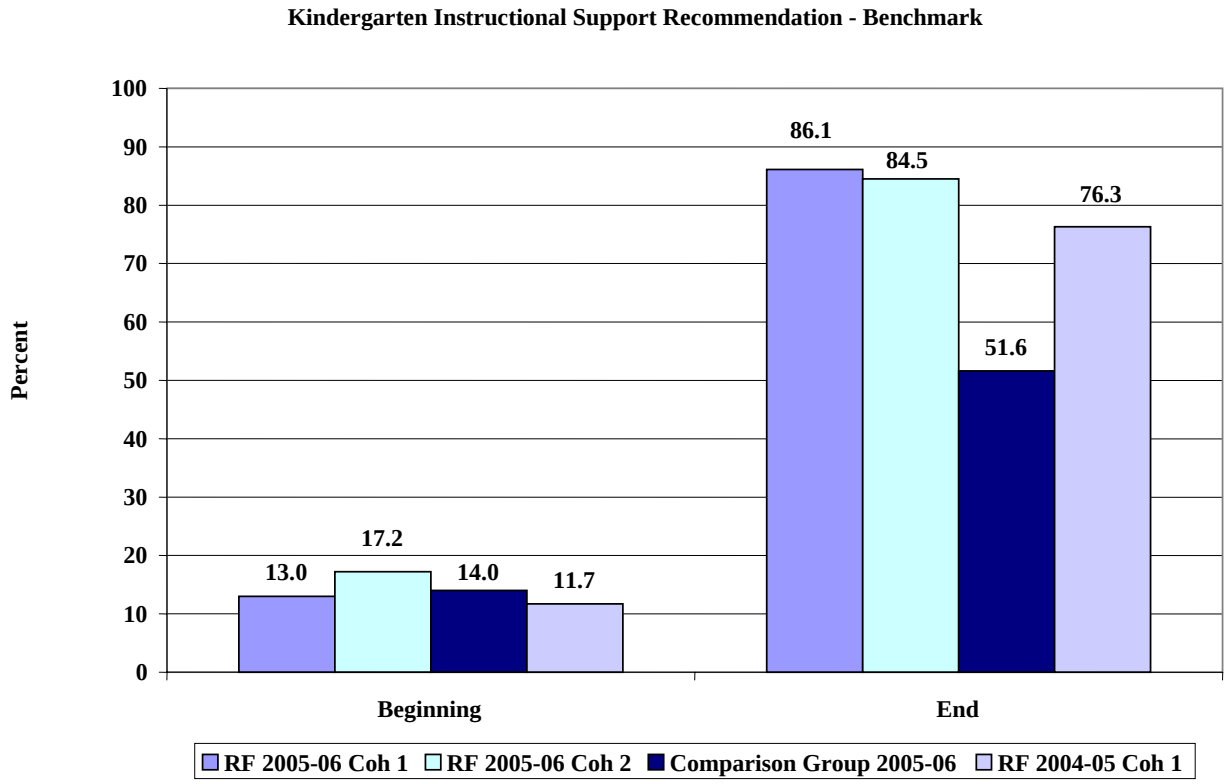

Figure 4-1

First Grade

Table 4-2 shows the ISR classifications and the number of first grade students in each category at the beginning and end of the year. Students in the four groups are shown: for 2005-2006 cohort 1, cohort 2, the comparison group, and cohort 1 2004-2005.

Benchmark:

- Cohort 1 (63.9 percent) had the largest percent of first grade students at benchmark by the end of the year but had a -1.9 percentage points from the beginning of the year.
- Cohort 2 changed less than a percentage point, the continuing group had a 3.6 percentage point gain, the comparison group had a -10 percentage point difference from beginning of the year to the end.

Strategic:

- At the beginning of the year, cohort 1 began with 21.1 percent of students in the strategic category, cohort 2 had 26.9 percent, the comparison group had 25.9 and the continuing group had 26.4 percent.
- Again there was only a small gain in the amount of change from beginning to end of the year, cohort 1 ended with 21.6 percent in strategic, cohort 2 ended with 23.1 percent, the comparison group ended with 29.8 percent and the continuing group ended with 25.1 percent of students in the strategic category.

Intensive:

- At the end of the year, only 14.5 percent of cohort 1, 19.3 percent of cohort 2, 29.2 percent of the comparison group, and 20.5 percent of the continuing groups' students were in the intensive category.
- Cohort 2 (-2.9 percentage point difference) and the comparison group (-5.9 percentage point difference) showed slight increases in the percent of students in intensive from the beginning of the year to the end.

Table 4-2
First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Numbers and Percentages

Group		First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year				First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year			
		Intensive	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**	**Total**	**Intensive**	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**	**Total**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	N	755	1216	3797	5768	837	1246	3684	5767
	%	13.1%	21.1%	65.8%	100.0%	14.5%	21.6%	63.9%	100.0%
RF 05-06 cohort 2	N	107	176	371	654	126	151	377	654
	%	16.4%	26.9%	56.7%	100.0%	19.3%	23.1%	57.6%	100.0%
Compars 05-06	N	231	257	505	993	296	302	414	1012
	%	23.3%	25.9%	50.9%	100.0%	29.2%	29.8%	40.9%	100.0%
RF 04-05 cohort 1	N	1275	1475	2845	5595	1147	1407	3044	5598
	%	22.8%	26.4%	50.8%	100.0%	20.5%	25.1%	54.4%	100.0%

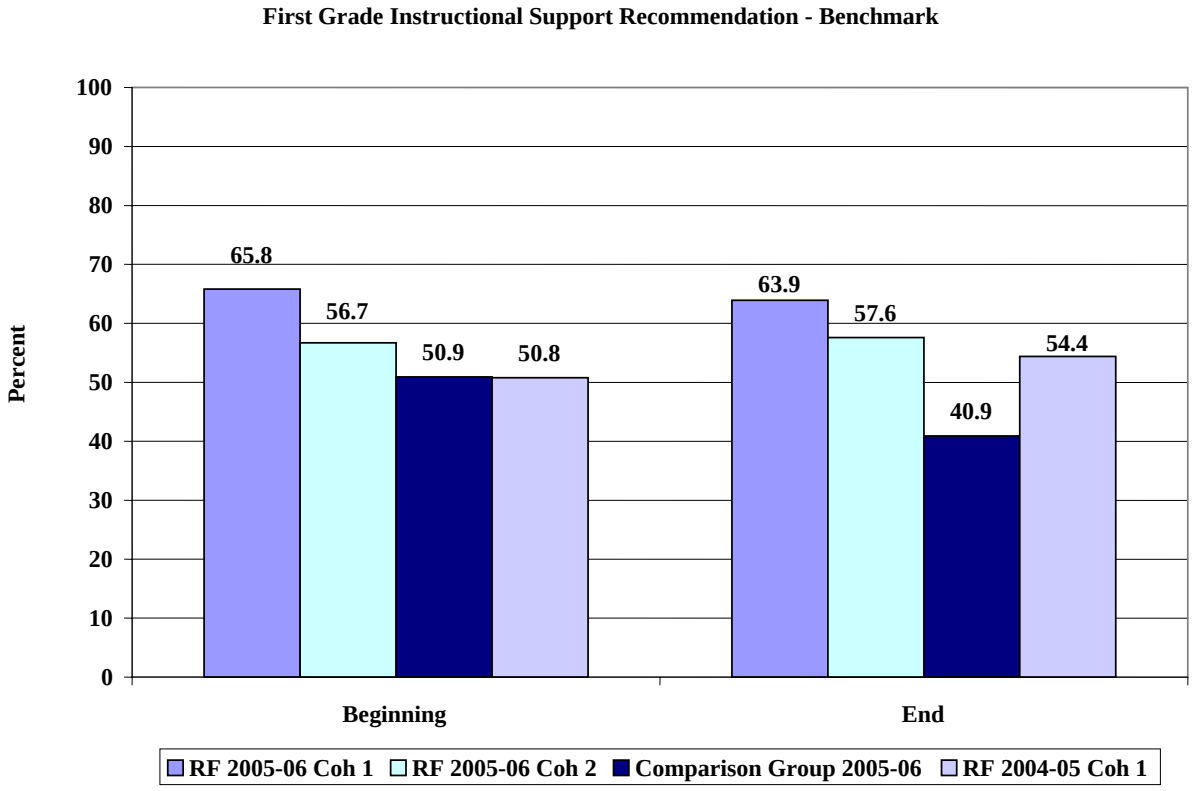

Figure 4-2

Two-Year Subset: Kindergarten 2004-2005 and First Grade 2005-2006

- Reading First students in the two-year subset who began in kindergarten in 2004-2005 and completed first grade in 2005-2006 ended the year with a slightly higher percentage of students at benchmark than did all tested four groups of Reading First students.

- The Reading First two-year subset group ended their first grade 2005-2006 year with 67.2 percent at benchmark on DIBELS compared to 63.9 percent of cohort 1, 57.6 percent of cohort 2, 40.9 percent of the comparison group, and 54.4 percent of the continuing group.

Table 4-3
Students in Reading First Cohort 1 for Two-Years:
First Grade Instructional Support Recommendations 2005-2006

First Graders Who Were in RF in Kindergarten		Intensive % First Grade			Strategic % First Grade			Benchmark % First Grade		
2005-2006	**Total N**	**Beg**	**End**	**Diff**	**Beg**	**End**	**Diff**	**Beg**	**End**	**Diff**
2005-06 – 2-yr sts Cohort 1- 63 schs	4,143	7.2	12.1	4.9	19.9	20.7	0.8	72.9	67.2	-5.7
2004-2005*										
2004-05 – 2-yr sts Cohort 1- 63 schs	3,940	16.5	18.7	2.2	27.4	24.8	-2.6	56.1	56.5	0.4

*2004-05 data revised 9/23/05 and differ slightly from initial report

Second Grade

Table 4-4 illustrates the ISR classifications and the number of second grade students in each category at the beginning and end of the year.

Benchmark:

- At the end of the year, cohort 1 showed 53.5 percent of their students at benchmark, cohort 2 showed 58.7 percent, the comparison grouped showed 36.8 percent and the continuing group showed 46.1 percent at benchmark.
- Cohort 2 showed the largest increase (20.9 percentage points) in the percent of students at benchmark from beginning (37.8 percent) to the end (58.7 percent) of the year.
- The comparison group showed the smallest increase in the percent of students who moved to benchmark from beginning of the year (33.0 percent) to the end of the year (36.8 percent).

Strategic:

- At the beginning of the year, cohort 1 began with 28.8 percent of students in the strategic category, cohort 2 had 26.4 percent, the comparison group had 28.9 percent and the continuing group had 28.1 percent in the strategic category.
- Cohort 1 and 2 had the largest gains in the percentage students (12 percentage points) moving out of strategic from the beginning of the year to the end.

Intensive:

- At the beginning of the year, cohort 1 began with 32.7 percent of students in the intensive category, cohort 2 had 35.9 percent, the comparison group had 38.0 percent and continuing group had 40.0 percent in the intensive category.
- Cohort 1 had a -2.6 percent point difference and cohort 2 a -8.7 percent difference for students who moved out of intensive by the end of the year.
- The comparison group (6.2 percentage point increase) showed an increase in the percent of students categorized as intensive from the beginning to the end of the year.

Table 4-4
Second Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Numbers and Percentages

		Second Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year				Second Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year			
Group		**Intensive**	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**	**Total**	**Intensive**	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**	**Total**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	N	1810	1591	2126	5527	1662	907	2958	5527
	%	32.7	28.8	38.5	100.0	30.1	16.4	53.5	100.0
RF 05-06 cohort 2	N	211	155	222	588	160	83	345	588
	%	35.9	26.4	37.8	100.0	27.2	14.1	58.7	100.0
Compars 05-06	N	372	283	323	978	433	186	360	979
	%	38.0	28.9	33.0	100.00	44.2	19.0	36.8	100.0
RF 04-05 cohort 1	N	2249	1581	1797	5627	2072	964	2592	5628
	%	40.0%	28.1%	31.9%	100.0%	36.8%	17.1%	46.1%	100.0%

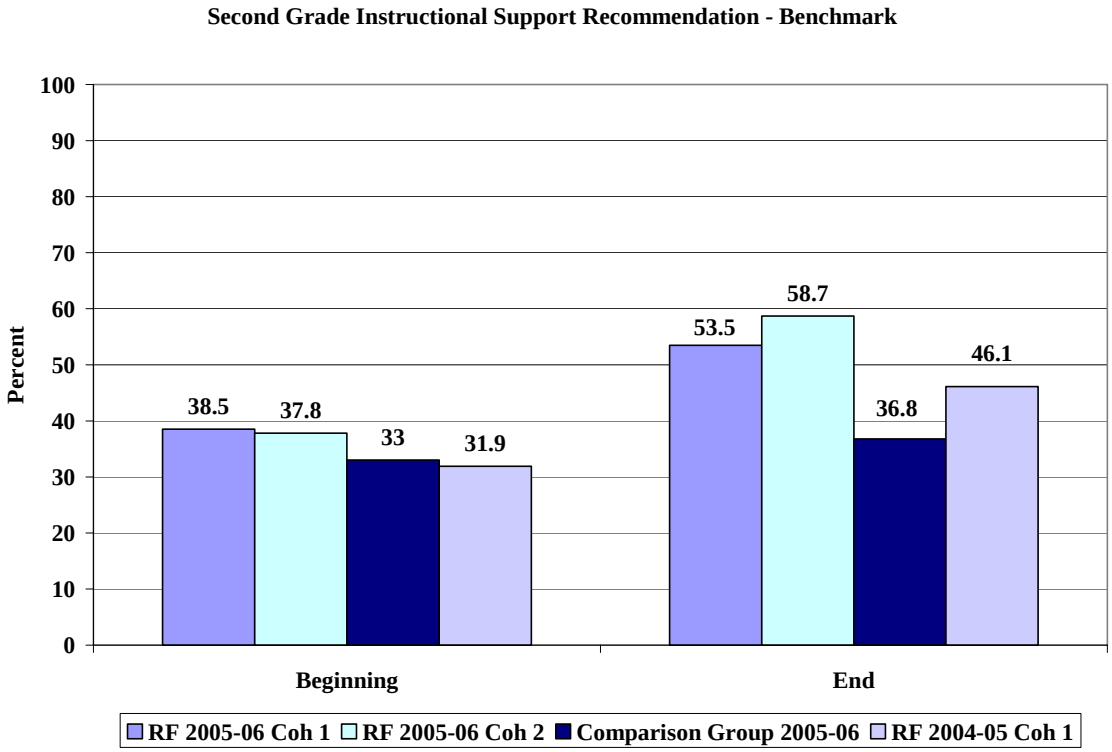

Figure 4-3

Third Grade

Table 4-5 shows the ISR classifications and the number of third grade students in each category at the beginning and end of the year.
Benchmark:

- At the end of the year, cohort 1 showed half of their students at benchmark (51.5%), cohort 2 showed 49.3 percent, the comparison grouped showed 36.9 percent and the continuing students showed 30.5 percent at benchmark.
- Cohort 1 showed the greatest movement to year end benchmark with a16.8 percentage point increase.
- Cohort 2 also showed an increase (13.7 percent point difference) in the percent of students at benchmark from beginning to the end of the year.

Strategic:

- At the end of the year, cohort 1 began with 26.0 percent of students in the strategic category, cohort 2 had 32.9 percent, the comparison group had 37.1 percent and the continuing group had 32.8 percent in the strategic category.
- Cohort 2 decreased while the comparison group and the continuing group increased the percentage of students in strategic at the end of the year.

Intensive:

- At the beginning of the year, cohort 1 began with 36.0 percent of students in the intensive category, cohort 2 had 34.4 percent, the comparison group had 35.9 percent and the continuing group had 46.1 percent in the intensive category.
- Cohort 1 had a -13.5 percent percentage point difference followed by cohort 2 with -10.6 percent points for students moving out of the intensive category by the end of the year.

Table 4-5
Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Numbers and Percentages

Group		Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year				Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year			
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark	Total	Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark	Total
RF 05-06 cohort 1	N	2006	1629	1932	5567	1251	1449	2867	5567
	%	36.0%	29.3%	34.7%	100.0%	22.5%	26.0%	51.5%	100.0%
RF 05-06 cohort 2	N	198	173	205	576	137	155	284	576
	%	34.4%	30.0%	35.6%	100.0%	23.8%	26.9%	49.3%	100.0%
Compars 05-06	N	247	205	236	688	179	255	254	688
	%	35.9%	29.8%	34.3%	100.0%	26.0%	37.1%	36.9%	100.0%
RF 04-05 cohort 1	N	2456	1391	1481	5328	1954	1748	1626	5328
	%	46.1%	26.1%	27.8%	100.0%	36.7%	32.8%	30.5%	100.0%

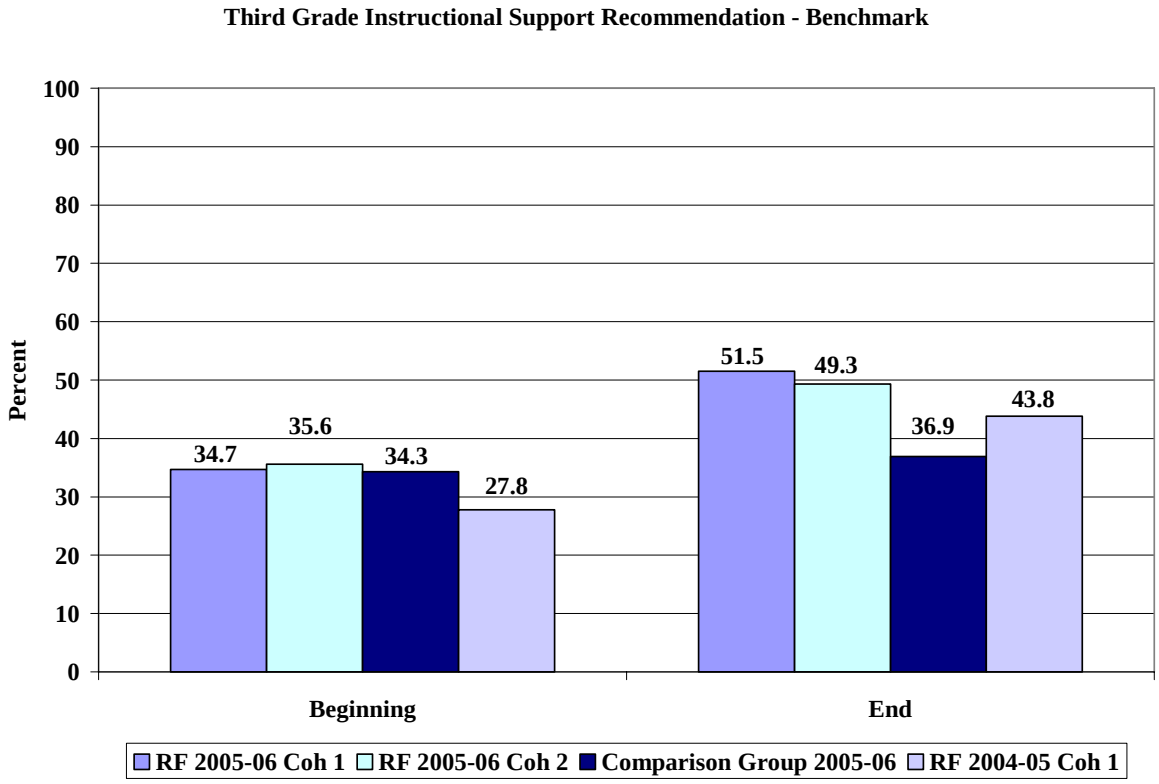

Figure 4-4

Three-Year Subsets: Beginning Kindergarten 2003-2004 and First Grade 2003-2004

- Reading First students in the three-year subset who began in kindergarten in 2003-2004 and completed second grade in 2005-2006 ended the year with a slightly higher percentage of students at benchmark (57.9%) than cohort 1 2005-2006 (53.5%), comparison group (36.8%) and cohort 1 2004-2005 (46.1%). Cohort 2's percentage of students at benchmark exceeded this subset slightly.

- The Reading First three-year subset group ended their third grade 2005-2006 year with 54.8 percent at benchmark on DIBELS compared to 51.5 percent of cohort 1, 37.9 percent of cohort 2, 36.9 percent of the comparison group and 30.5 percent of the continuing group.

Table 4-6
Students in Reading First Cohort 1 for Three-Years: Second and Third Grade

Grade		Intensive %			Strategic %			Benchmark %		
2005-2006	**Total N**	**Beg**	**End**	**Diff**	**Beg**	**End**	**Diff**	**Beg**	**End**	**Diff**
2nd grade Cohort 1- 63 schs	3105	25.6	25.4	-0.2	30.2	16.6	-13.6	44.2	57.9	13.7
3rd grade Cohort 1- 63 schs	3383	30.0	18.8	-11.2	31.4	26.4	-5.0	38.7	54.8	16.1

DIBELS Adequate Yearly Progress - Effectiveness

- Total of All Kindergarten Students making Adequate Progress and Effectiveness Rate
  - The overall effectiveness for cohort 1 was 91.2 percent. This represents the total percent of students who moved in positive direction. Of the entire cohort 1 group, 12.8 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year; 31.0 percent moved from strategic and 42.4 percent moved from intensive to benchmark, and 5.0 percent moved from intensive to benchmark.
  - The cohort 2 group effectiveness rate was 88.9 percent. This consisted of 16.8 percent at benchmark who remained there, 33.7 and 34.0 percent respectively who moved to benchmark from strategic and intensive, and 4.4 percent who moved from intensive to strategic.
  - The comparison group had an effectiveness rate of 63.5 percent, with less movement of students out of intensive and strategic to benchmark than with cohorts 1 or 2.

Table 4-7
Percent of Total Students Making Adequate Progress

Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___% made adequate progress.

Kindergarten		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	**Eff. Rate**	**% End Strategic**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	91.2%	5.0	42.4	31.0	12.8
RF 05-06 cohort 2	88.9%	4.4	34.0	33.7	16.8
Compare 05-06	63.5%	10.7	16.0	25.5	11.3
RF 04-05 cohort 1	84.5%	8.3	38.5	26.3	11.4

- Total of All First Grade Students making Adequate Progress and Effectiveness Rate
  - The overall effectiveness for cohort 1 was 67.3 percent. This represents the total percent of students who moved in positive direction. Of the entire cohort 1 group, 52.9 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year;

8.8 percent moved from strategic and 2.2 percent moved from intensive to benchmark, and 3.4 percent moved from intensive to benchmark.

- The cohort 2 group effectiveness rate was 61.1 percent. This consisted of 43.1 percent at benchmark who remained there, 11.6 and 2.9 percent respectively who moved to benchmark from strategic and intensive, and 3.5 percent who moved from intensive to strategic.
- The comparison group had an effectiveness rate of 46.2 percent, 33.1 who remained at benchmark, 6.6 and 1.9 who moved to benchmark from strategic and intensive, and 4.6 percent who moved from intensive to strategic.
- The 2004-2005 cohort 1 group had an effectiveness rate of 60.3 percent, 39.5 who remained at benchmark, 10.8 and 4.1 who moved to benchmark from strategic and intensive, and 5.9 who moved from intensive to strategic.

Table 4-8
Percent of Total Students Making Adequate Progress

Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___% made adequate progress.

First Grade		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	**Eff. Rate**	**% End Strategic**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	67.3%	3.4	2.2	8.8	52.9
RF 04-05 cohort 2	61.1%	3.5	2.9	11.6	43.1
Compare 04-05	46.2%	4.6	1.9	6.6	33.1
RF 04-05 cohort 1	60.3%	5.9	4.1	10.8	39.5

- Total of All First Second Students making Adequate Progress and Effectiveness Rate
  - The overall effectiveness for cohort 1 was 58.4 percent. This represents the total percent of students who moved in positive direction. Of the entire cohort 1 group, 36.3 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year; 14.3 percent moved from strategic and 2.9 percent moved from intensive to benchmark, and 4.9 percent moved from intensive to benchmark.
  - The cohort 2 group effectiveness rate was 64.1 percent. This consisted of 36.1 percent at benchmark who remained there, 16.8 and 5.8 percent respectively who moved to benchmark from strategic and intensive, and 5.4 percent who moved from intensive to strategic.
  - The comparison group had an effectiveness rate of 39.4 percent, with less movement of students out of intensive and strategic to benchmark than with cohorts 1 or 2.
  - The 2004-2005 cohort 1 group had an effectiveness rate of 51.3 percent and moved almost the same percent of students from intensive to benchmark as cohort 1.

Table 4-9
Percent of Total Students Making Adequate Progress

Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___% made adequate progress.

Second Grade		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	**Eff. Rate**	**% End Strategic**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	58.4%	4.9	2.9	14.3	36.3
RF 05-06 cohort 2	64.1%	5.4	5.8	16.8	36.1
Compare 05-06	39.4%	2.6	1.7	7.4	27.7
RF 04-05 cohort 1	51.3%	5.3	3.1	13.3	29.6

- Total of All Third Grade Students making Adequate Progress and Effectiveness Rate
  - The overall effectiveness for cohort 1 was 63.2 percent. This represents the total percent of students who moved in positive direction. Of the entire cohort 1 group, 32.7 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year; 16.1percent moved from strategic and 2.7 percent moved from intensive to benchmark, and 11.7 percent moved from intensive to benchmark.
  - The cohort 2 group effectiveness rate was 58.9 percent. This consisted of 31.3 percent at benchmark who remained there, 16.0 and 2.1 percent respectively who moved to benchmark from strategic and intensive, and 9.5 percent who moved from intensive to strategic.
  - The comparison group had an effectiveness rate of 48.7 percent, with the smallest percent moving out of intensive to benchmark.
  - The 2004-2005 cohort 1 group had an effectiveness rate of 56.1 percent, moving the greatest percent of students from intensive to benchmark.

Table 4-10
Percent of Total Students Making Adequate Progress

Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___% made adequate progress.

Third Grade		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	**Eff. Rate**	**% End Strategic**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**	**% End Benchmark**
RF 05-06 cohort 1	63.2%	11.7	2.7	16.1	32.7
RF 05-06 cohort 2	58.9%	9.5	2.1	16.0	31.3
Compare 05-06	48.7%	11.8	0.6	7.1	29.2
RF 04-05 cohort 1	56.1%	12.4	3.9	14.1	25.7

CHAPTER V
STUDENT ASSESSMENTS II:
AIMS, AIMS DPA and TERRANOVA READING RESULTS

The explanatory information on AIMS, AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA) and TerraNova standardized testing was compiled from several sources located at the Arizona Department of Education website (http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/aims/).

> AIMS DPA is the result of many years of intense effort and collaboration among teachers, administrators, and the Arizona Department of Education. Arizona students in Grades 3 through 8 are tested using the Dual Purpose Assessment (DPA). This assessment measures the students' level of proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics and provides students' national percentile rankings in reading, language, and mathematics. AIMS DPA combines 20 to 30 Norm Referenced Test (NRT) items with AIMS standards-based items into one test form. AIMS DPA provides separate NRT and AIMS scores while reducing the total number of items by approximately 40 percent. (*Grades 3-8 Guide to Test Interpretation: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards AIMS DPA, spring 2005,* p. 1)

Effective for the school year 2004-2005, the TerraNova has replaced the Stanford 9 (SAT9) in grades two and nine. For grades 3 - 8, norm-referenced (NRT) scores are taken from the AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA). The AIMS DPA provides a norm-referenced test score (NRT) and an AIMS score. The results of the tests are used by classroom teachers to guide instruction and improve student learning. The NRT compares a child's performance on certain test items to the performance of students nationwide by way of a percentile ranking. The AIMS score assesses a child's knowledge of the Arizona State Standards.

The following content areas are covered in AIMS DPA Reading:

> Excerpts from published literature are the basis for evaluating students' reading skills. As students read fiction and nonfiction passages, interviews, editorials, and articles, they answer questions assessing skills such as reading comprehension, identification of support for main ideas, application of multi-step directions, ability to make and support assertions, and analysis and evaluation of themes. Multiple-choice questions target specific skills. (*Grades 3-8 Guide to Test Interpretation: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards AIMS DPA, spring 2005,* p. 2)

In 2003 the AIMS and Stanford 9 scores should be viewed as baseline scores, as this was before the implementation of Reading First in 2003-2004.

The AIMS, AIMS DPA and TerraNova data were extracted from databases provided to APRC by the Office of Research and Evaluation, Arizona Department of Education. All Reading First and state of Arizona analyses were performed using the databases provided. Other sources of Arizona or Reading First data, such as totals from the past year's reports, were not used in this analysis. The all Arizona students category contains the students in the Reading First and comparison groups (see Methodology section for more detail).

AIMS – 3rd Grade

The AIMS score assesses a child's knowledge of the Arizona State Standards. Each student receives one of the following scores.

Exceeds the Standard – Students who score in this level illustrate a superior academic performance as evidenced by achievement that is substantially beyond the goal for all students. Students who perform at this level demonstrate the ability to determine the meaning of words and phrases using context clues, use reading comprehension strategies to draw conclusions and analyze literary elements, and evaluate informational text to determine fact from opinion.

Meets the Standard – Students who score in this level demonstrate a solid academic performance on subject matter as reflected by the reading standard. Students who perform at this level are able to identify character traits, setting, and the sequence of events. In addition to noting the topic sentence in a paragraph, they are able to identify the main idea and supporting details in informational text.

Approaches the Standard – Students who score in this level show partial understanding of the knowledge and application of the skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Students who perform at this level show some understanding of decoding skills, using pictures and information from the text to determine the meaning of simple words. They are able to identify images which appeal to the senses and repetition that is utilized in poetry. Some gaps in knowledge and skills are evident and may require additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding.

Falls Far Below the Standard – Students who score in this level may have significant gaps and limited knowledge and skills that are necessary to satisfactorily meet the state's reading standard. Students will usually require a considerable amount of additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding.

The goal is to have each student "exceed" or "meet" the standards. Students who "fall far below" are doing poorly compared to those in all other categories; students who "approach" the standard are just short of meeting the standards. Students in the four categories together total the population for that group.

The two following tables show breakouts of students in the four categories. The two lowest groups are contrasted in the first table and the two highest groups in the second. The percentages for students in each group for the past three years are also shown and discussed. Percentages do not add to 100% for the Reading First and comparisons groups because the database contained students with no reading scores but who did have other AIMS DPA scores less than 1 percent of scores were missing for any of the groups for any year.

This year, there was a higher percentage of Reading First students in the higher AIMS categories with a corresponding lower percentage of Reading First students in the lower AIMS categories.

Table 5-1 illustrates the percent of students who scored in the lower categories of "falls far below" and "approaches" for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

- The decrease in the percent of students who scored in the "falls far below" category that began in 2004 continued in 2006 for Reading First cohort 1, Reading First cohort 2, the comparison group and all Arizona students. For the Reading First cohort 1, the previous three year trend of an increase in students categorized as "approaches" ended as more students improved and moved up to the "meet" and "exceed" categories.
- Since 2004, the Reading First comparison group has also had fewer students categorized as "fall far below." Only 13% were categorized as "falls far below" compared to 22% in 2004.
- For the Reading First cohort 1 the "falls far below" is only half of what is was in 2003. However, this drop and the overall 2006 percentages are similar to that of the comparison group, with the Reading First cohorts 1 and 2 and comparison groups in 2006 with about 13 percent at "falls far below" and the "approaches" groups in the low 30 percents.

Table 5-1
AIMS Data Percent of Students Who Scored
"Falls Far Below" or "Approach"

3rd Grade	2003		2004		2005		2006	
	FFB*	**APP****	**FFB**	**APP**	**FFB**	**APP**	**FFB**	**APP**
Reading First cohort 1	24.9	25.1	30.3	23.0	14.1	35.2	13.1	33.4
	N=6,430		N=6,476		N=6,469		N=6,449	
Reading First cohort 2	--	--	--	--	16.6	32.9	13.5	30.5
	--		--		N=787		N=652	
RF Comparison Group	21.8	26.0	26.0	23.0	15.2	35.3	13.0	32.0
	N=1,486		N=1,367		N=1,362		N=1,192	
All Arizona Schools	15.3	19.4	19.3	18.5	10.2	26.1	6.0	20.0
	N=75,540		N=77,014		N=80,181		N=64,925	

*FFB = Falls Far Below
**APP = Approaches

Students who pass the AIMS test are scored as "meet" or "exceed." For 2006, larger percentages of Reading First students scored than in the previous years. Table 5-2 illustrates the percent of students who scored "meet" and the percent of students who score "exceeds" for 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

- In 2006, all groups showed an increase in the percent of students who scored in the "exceeds" category and a decrease in the percent of students who score in the "meets" category.
- Compared to Reading First cohort 1, all Arizona students who scored "exceed" were 8.3 and 9.5 percent higher respectively for 2003 and 2004, which doubled to 13% in 2006.
- From 2005 to 2006, Reading First cohort 1, cohort 2, the comparison group and all Arizona students increased the percentage of students categorized as "exceed."

Table 5-2
AIMS Data Percent of Students Who Scored
"Meet" or "Exceed"

3rd Grade	2003		2004		2005		2006	
	MEET	EXCEED	MEET	EXCEED	MEET	EXCEED	MEET	EXCEED
Reading First cohort 1	42.0	7.5	36.5	9.8	46.1	3.9	49.0	4.5
	N=6,430		N=6,476		N=6,469		N=6,449	
Reading First cohort 2	---	---	---	---	45.0	5.3	50.5	5.5
	--		--		N=787		N=652	
RF Comparison Group	42.8	8.5	38.6	11.9	45.7	3.3	50.3	4.4
	N=1,486		N=1,367		N=1,392		N=1,192	
All Arizona Schools	48.6	15.8	42.4	19.3	53.3	9.8	62.0	13.0
	N=75,540		N=77,014		N=80,181		N=64,925	

TerraNova & AIMS DPA: Grades 2 and 3

Beginning in 2005, the norm-reference test items for Arizona students were included in the AIMS DPA test. Before 2005, the Stanford 9 was used as the standardized, norm-referenced test that was given to all students in Arizona in grades 2 through 9.

TerraNova and Stanford 9 scores are reported as percentile ranks and stanine scores; a normal curve equivalent score was also computed. The percentile rank places the student in comparison to the national norm group. Average national percentile scores are from 25 – 75. The stanine score divides the norm population into 9 groups (1 low to 9 high). The student is then ranked by this score according to the group norm. Stanine scores of 4, 5 and 6 are considered average. The normal curve equivalent score is the percentile rank (unequal intervals) converted into an equal interval scale so that changes in scores are equivalent and mathematical operations (such as showing differences between scores) can be between scores) can be performed.

A summary of second grade scores as reported in Table 5-3 are presented below.

- In 2006, the percentile rank of students in the Reading First cohort 1 group nearly mirrored that of the baseline score.
- In 2006, the percentile rank of students in Reading First cohort 2 was higher than Reading First cohort 1.
- The comparison group's rank was lower than either Reading First cohort 1 or 2 in 2006 (no previous year's data available).
- The percentile rank for all four years was higher for all Arizona schools compared to Reading First cohort 1, cohort 2 and the comparison group.

Table 5-3
Second Grade Stanford 9 and TerraNova Percentile and Stanine Scores

	2003 Stanford 9*		2004 Stanford 9		2005 TerraNova		2006 TerraNova	
	PR*	**STA****	**PR**	**STA**	**PR**	**STA**	**PR**	**STA**
Reading First cohort 1	37.8	4	39.2	4	36.9	4	37.76	4
	N=6,237		N=6,540		N=6,643		N=7,892	
Reading First cohort 2	---	---	---	---	39.1	4	41.64	4
	--		--		N=751		N=679	
RF Comparison Group	---	---	---	---	---	---	35.69	4
	--		--		--		N=1,738	
All Arizona Schools	47.9	5	48.5	5	46.8	5	46.98	5
	N=74,326		N=77,175		N=78,455		N=79,868	

* PR = Percentile score, **STA = Stanine score

[+] These scores are baseline, prior to the implementation of Reading First.

The normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores showed the same trend as the percentile rank scores. Using the NCE score, it is possible to estimate how large or small the differences are between the scores.

- For second grade, the NCE score of students in the Reading First cohort 1 group and Reading First cohort 2 increased from 2005 to 2006.
- In second grade, cohort 2 group NCE scores were slightly higher than cohort 1 in 2005 and 2006.
- The NCE scores for all Arizona schools while greater than Reading First cohort 1 and 2 and the comparison group, has remained unchanged for the last two years while cohort 1 and 2 increased.

Table 5-4
Second Grade Stanford 9 and TerraNova NCE Scores

	2003 Stanford 9[+]	**2004 Stanford 9**	**2005 TerraNova**	**2006 TerraNova**
	NCE*	NCE	NCE	NCE
Reading First cohort 1	41.7	42.8	40.8	41.48
	N=6,237	N=6,540	N=6,643	N=7,892
Reading First cohort 2	---	---	42.3	44.43
	--	--	N=751	N=679
Reading First Comparison	---	---	---	39.88
				N=1,738
All Arizona Schools	48.6	49.0	47.7	47.8
	N=74,326	N=77,175	N=78,455	N=79,868

[*] NCE = Normal Curve Equivalent
[+] These scores are baseline, prior to the implementation of Reading First.

A summary of third grade scores as reported in Table 5-5 are presented below.

- For third grade, the percentile rank of students in the Reading First cohort 1 and cohort 2 showed a slight increase from 2005 to 2006.
- In third grade, the Reading First group percentile ranks for all four years were lower than the rank for all Arizona students.

Table 5-5
Third Grade Stanford 9 and AIMS DPA/TerraNova Percentile and Stanine Scores

	2003 Stanford 9*		2004 Stanford		2005 TerraNova		2006 TerraNova	
	PR*	**STA****	**PR**	**STA**	**PR**	**STA**	**PR**	**STA**
Reading First cohort 1	33.6	4	34.9	4	34.4	4	35.34	4
	N=6,411		N=6,319		N=6,427		N=6,394	
Reading First cohort 2	---	---	---	---	35.7	4	36.76	4
	--		--		N=786		N=653	
RF Comparison Group	---	---	---	---	---	---	35.57	4
	--		--		--		N=1,561	
All Arizona Schools	45.6	5	46.5	5	44.4	5	45.95	5
	N=77,259		N=76,654		N=79,717		N=79,948	

* PR = Percentile score
**STA = Stanine score
[+] These scores are baseline, prior to the implementation of Reading First

The normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores showed the same trend as the percentile rank scores. Using the NCE score, it is possible to estimate how large or small the differences are between the scores.

- For third grade in 2006, the NCE score of students in the Reading First cohort 1, cohort 2 and the comparison group were very similar.
- The NCE scores for Reading First cohort 1 and 2 increased compared to 2005.
- The NCE scores for all Arizona schools exceeded cohort 1 and 2 and the comparison group for all four years.

Table 5-6
Third Grade Stanford 9 and AIMS DPA/TerraNova Scores

	2003 Stanford 9[+]	2004 Stanford 9	2005 TerraNova	2006 TerraNova
	NCE*	**NCE**	**NCE**	**NCE**
Reading First cohort 1	38.4	39.3	38.9	39.47
	N=6,411	N=6,319	N=6,427	N=6,394
Reading First cohort 2	---	---	39.7	40.57
	--	--	N=786	N=653
Reading First Comparison	---	---	---	39.75
	--	--	--	N=1,561
All Arizona Schools	46.9	47.5	45.9	46.91
	N=77,259	N=76,654	79,717	N=79,948

[*] NCE = Normal Curve Equivalent
[+] These scores are baseline, prior to the implementation of Reading First.

CHAPTER VI
INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

Previous chapters reviewed the work of Arizona Reading First in the provision of professional development, the development of instructional leadership and collaborative structures and practices, and support for assessment systems. The purpose of all of these activities is ultimately to create the awareness, knowledge, and external conditions necessary to enhance the delivery of instruction in the classroom.

In the 2005-2006 school year, the perceived impact of Reading First on instruction continued to be positive (see Table 6-1); almost all principals and coaches and three-quarters of teachers felt that reading instruction at their school had improved noticeably. These proportions were similar to the previous year.

Table 6-1
Perceived Impact of Reading First on Instruction

I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably this year.	Percentage Strongly Agreeing/Agreeing		
	Principals	Coaches	Teachers
2004-2005	95	91	77
2005-2006	90	95	76

This chapter examines further evidence related to what instruction and interventions looked like in 2005-2006 and how they have changed over time. The chapter begins with a review of the Reading First classroom, including use of the core reading program and issues of fidelity. It then describes the delivery of instruction, including instruction in the five components, classroom management, and effective use of time. It ends with an analysis of the delivery of interventions for struggling readers.

The 90-Minute Reading Block

A cornerstone of the Reading First approach is the establishment of a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block. According to coaches, all but four schools (94%) met this requirement in kindergarten and all but one school (98%) met it in grades one, two and three. These figures changed slightly from the previous year, with slightly fewer schools providing at least 90 minutes of reading instruction. However, more than half of schools (59%) extended their blocks beyond the 90 minutes, adding an additional 10 to 90 minutes of daily reading instruction.

Table 6-2
Percentage of Schools Providing 90 Minutes or More of Reading Instruction

	2004-2005	2005-2006
Kindergarten	98	94
Grade 1-3	100	98

As called for in the grant, the reading block was characterized as "uninterrupted" across all grades in 86 percent of schools. Among those schools with interrupted blocks at one or more grades (14%), the majority had extended their reading blocks beyond 90 minutes; it is therefore likely that the interruption consisted of a break between the first 90 minutes and the extended block of additional reading time. However, there were three schools in which the reading was not extended and the 90-minute block was interrupted at one or more grades. Although a small proportion of teachers (12%) reported the block being used for non-reading instruction or tasks at least monthly, no evaluation observations were interrupted or used for other subjects such as math, science, or writing.

Core Program

When schools applied to receive Reading First sub-grants, they selected a core reading program for grades K-3. Satisfaction with the core reading program remained high and very similar to the previous year (see Figure 6-1). While at almost every school there was at least one teacher who did not agree that they were "very satisfied" with the core program, dissatisfaction tended to be concentrated in 13 of the schools at which more than half of teachers did not agree with this statement.

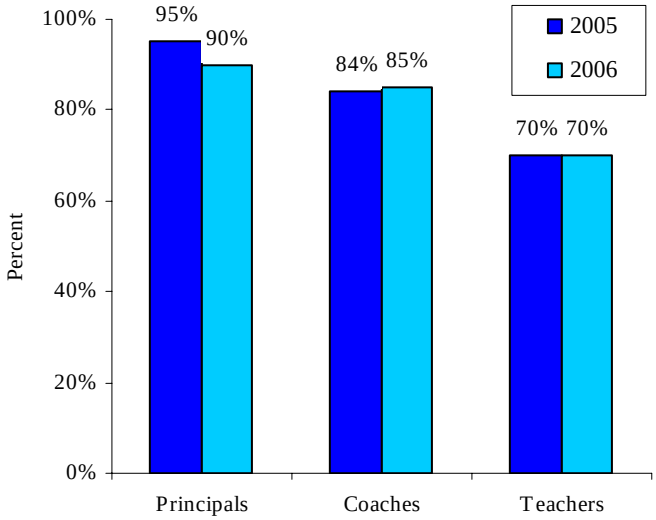

Figure 6-1
Percent Very Satisfied with Core Reading Program

Fidelity to the Core Reading Program

The core program remains the centerpiece of instruction during the 90 minute reading block. Observers saw the core program used during every lesson; they also witnessed that the teacher's manuals were actively used or, at minimum, open and/or out in 81 percent of classrooms.

Interviewed coaches were split between those who said the definition of fidelity to the core had not changed since the beginning of the grant (about one-third) and those who believed that it had (about two-thirds). Those who said the definition had not changed cited that high expectations on this issue were clearly communicated at the start of the grant.

> *No, fidelity hasn't changed. The expectations have always been there. (Coach)*
>
> *The expectations were drilled into everyone the first year, 'Thou shalt do this and thou shalt not do that.' (Coach)*

Among those who felt that the definition had changed, most said it had loosened to accommodate supplemental and intervention materials, teacher judgment and decisions, and adjustments to the core program.

> *Fidelity is changing a little bit. It's ok now to not do everything in the core program. They tell us now to visit others, to see how others teach and get ideas about how we can make good decisions. (Coach)*
>
> *We learned what things we can alter and what things we can't. For instance, you don't need the morning message, or you can give more examples. We know a little bit more about what 'fidelity' means. (Coach)*
>
> *It's not as dogmatic. Teachers will use worksheets from somewhere else, strategies that aren't in the core, as long as they are aligned with the goal of the lesson. (Coach)*

Modifications to the Core Reading Program

This split in perceptions of fidelity was echoed in other data; surveys asked coaches and teachers about the acceptability of specific modifications to the core program. A comparison of data from the previous year to this year (2004-2005 to 2005-2006) shows that coaches considered some modifications slightly more acceptable over time, while they considered others slightly less acceptable over time. This may indicate refinement and communication of expectations by the state to coaches. The perception among teachers, however, was much more uniform; their reports showed almost all modifications to be slightly less acceptable than the year before, indicating a tighter level of fidelity.

Within the current year, coaches and teachers were largely on the same page regarding the acceptability of specific modifications, indicating that there was good communication from coaches to teachers regarding expectations.

Modifications that respondents indicated were less acceptable included:

- The order in which the lessons are delivered (for example, Lesson 41 could go before Lesson 38),
- Skipping a certain lesson entirely,
- The texts students read for a particular theme.

While modifications that respondents indicated were more acceptable included:

- The example or model that the teacher uses first to show students how to do the work,
- The comprehension questions that go with a particular text,
- The number of practice examples that students recite chorally,
- The way students are asked to respond (for example, chorally instead of individually).

There was less universal agreement regarding the acceptability of modifications related to the list of vocabulary words (whether adding or deleting/substituting some words), and the pacing (for example, whether to move on at the program's suggested pace or slow down/speed up as they thought appropriate).

Supplemental Programs

Supplemental programs are intended to fill the gaps in core programs or provide students who are less than one year below grade-level with "preteaching" or "reteaching" materials for additional practice. Supplemental instruction may be provided in large group, small group, or through one-on-one instruction. It should be very explicit and targeted. It may consist of as little as putting a post-it note with a particular letter on the desk of a student struggling or it may mean the adoption of a program such as *Ladders to Literacy* because the school's core program does not provide enough practice in phonemic awareness.

Data results point to a gap between the perceived need for supplemental programs and their actual use. While 63 percent of teachers surveyed believed that there were gaps in the core program that needed to be addressed using supplemental programs, 41 percent of teachers reported actually using supplemental programs during the reading block. Teachers who thought there were gaps were evenly split between those used supplementals and those who did not.

Among teachers who used supplemental programs, the majority (76%) were satisfied with the programs (only 6% were not satisfied; the rest were neutral in their responses). There were no differences in satisfaction based on grade level.

Differentiated Instruction

Reading First promotes instruction targeted at each student's reading level. Whether working in larger or smaller groups, students should be working with materials that allow them both to be

successful and to develop the next skills they need in order to progress. In Arizona, the 90 minute block is to be delivered to both grade and instructional level; whole group instruction is mixed with small group instruction that enables teachers to meet the needs of students at their instructional level. At those schools with an extended reading block, the 90 minutes can be entirely whole group if the extra time is devoted to small group.[1]

Data indicate that while most classrooms included a level of differentiated instruction, students could use more. Teacher feedback on the degree to which differentiated instruction was actually taking place is presented in Table 6-3. The majority of teachers (71%) reported that students in their reading classroom 'usually' or 'always' received differentiated instruction.

On the other hand, findings also indicate that some teachers struggle with providing adequate differentiation during the reading block (see Table 6-3). A smaller but still significant proportion of teachers (21%) reported that students in their reading classroom 'usually' or 'always' needed more differentiation than they were able to provide. In addition, another half of teachers (46%) reported that their students 'sometimes' required more differentiation (data not shown in figure).

Table 6-3
Teacher Perception of Differentiated Instruction

	Usually or Always	Sometimes	Never or Rarely
Students in my reading classroom receive reading instruction at different levels within my classroom (i.e. differentiated instruction).	71	18	12
Students in my reading classroom need more differentiation than I am able to provide.	21	46	33

Teachers' concerns about their ability to differentiate within the reading block was echoed in their interview data. Teachers had several concerns regarding grouping and differentiation. Most frequently mentioned were large class sizes and a lack if instructional aides/paraprofessionals.

> *With too many students and not enough instructional aides at every grade level, it's hard to differentiate instruction. (Teacher)*

> *There is a lack of teacher aides; this affects the time we have available and it seems as though we often run out of time to get everything done. (Teacher)*

Also a concern was the provision of whole group instruction to heterogeneous or insufficiently leveled classes. Many felt "limited by the core program," citing that for higher and/or lower students, whole group was "a waste" but students were obligated to "sit through it."

> *The 30 minutes of whole group I do is only appropriate for about half my kids. (Teacher)*

[1] Interview with Arizona Reading First Director, June 24, 2004.

> *It's difficult because the core program is so scripted, these lessons don't work for certain students and I'm supposed to stay where I am at, but it's difficult to get them all on track. (Teacher)*

Helping teachers find ways to increase the amount of differentiated instruction taking place in their reading classrooms might be a focus for state-provided technical assistance and professional development in the coming year. Accordingly, structures that help schools and teachers differentiate instruction include grouping, student to instructor ratios, and extended reading time that includes small group work. Each of these is addressed below.

Grouping

Although grouping students by skill level does not in and of itself guarantee that instruction will be targeted to students' levels, it is one way to facilitate the delivery of differentiated instruction. Coaches were optimistic and positive regarding the degree to which they thought their schools were successful at grouping students to meet their different needs. Coaches said, "we are very successful," "we work hard to group appropriately," and "we do an effective job." Decisions about grouping were made largely by reading coaches and teachers together at grade-level meetings.

Yet, the strong majority of teachers (73%) reported that the group of students they usually had in their classroom during the reading block was heterogeneous, meaning that students were at a wide variety of levels and had differing instructional needs. Teachers from the earlier grades (kindergarten and first) were more likely to have heterogeneous reading classrooms than those in the later grades (second and third). Grouping issues were discussed during interviews, in which many teachers expressed frustration with trying to meet the needs of students who were at so many different instructional levels, particularly during whole group.

As well, the observed instruction consisted even more predominantly of self-contained classrooms (84%) as compared to walk-to-read (WTR) classrooms (14%). Among Arizona Reading First schools, grouping by skill level with the WTR model, where students walk to another teacher for reading instruction, was not a particularly popular method for homogenizing reading classrooms: almost half of schools (48%) did not use WTR. A fairly small proportion (19%) utilized WTR in all or nearly all classes; the remaining third (33%) did so in some grades or classes but not all.

Student-Instructor Ratios

Another factor affecting a teacher's ability to differentiate is class size. On surveys, Arizona Reading First teachers reported a very wide range in the number of students they typically had in their reading classroom, from two to 43 students (see Figure 6-2). Most teachers (60%) reported classrooms of 20 to 25 students; the average was 22 students. This was corroborated during site

visits, in which evaluators observed reading classroom sizes of three to 28 students, with an average of 20 students.

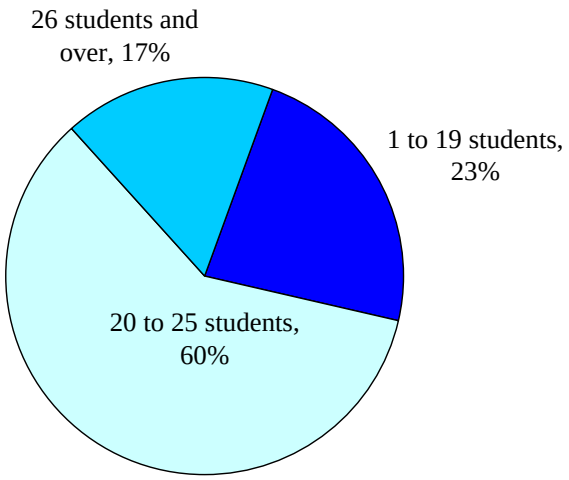

Figure 6-2
Class Size During the Reading Block (Survey Data)

The ability to work with students at their instructional level is often dependent on the availability of paraprofessionals to provide support. This availability varied widely and was heavily influenced by grade, with kindergarten having more support than the upper grades. Among teachers, responses were evenly split: 46 percent cited having paraprofessional support at least once a week, while 54 percent cited having paraprofessional support less frequently, if at all.

Site visits reinforced these data and, in fact, provided evidence of less paraprofessional support than survey responses. During site visits, two-thirds (67%) of observed classrooms did not have another adult (paraprofessional, aide, tutor or volunteer) in addition to the teacher present.

Extended Reading Time

Over half of Arizona Reading First schools (59%) devote additional time beyond the 90-minute block to reading; these schools added an additional 10 to 90 minutes of daily reading instruction. In accordance with the state vision, this extended reading time often included small group instruction. Interviewed teachers appreciated such small group time, saying that it provided more flexibility and opportunity to meet students' needs; moreover that it was "where the real learning happens."

Meeting the Needs of ELL Students

In accordance with the adoption of Arizona Proposition 203, English Language Education for Children in Public Schools, all public school instruction is conducted in English. For those students who are non-native English speakers, addressing their language development needs is part of differentiated instruction. This is a particularly salient issue in Arizona Reading First schools as the proportion of ELL students averaged 45 percent across the project; the strong majority of schools had at least 20 percent ELL students, with some as high as 89 percent. This section reports on the experiences of Arizona Reading First schools in meeting the needs of ELL students.

Survey results showed that fewer than half of the coaches (47%) and teachers (41%), and about 60 percent of principals believed that the needs of ELL students are being met as shown in Figure 6-3. However, this was an increase in the belief over the percentage of respondents in 2005 who believed that Reading First was doing an excellent job meeting the needs of ELL students; this increase was greater for principals and coaches than for teachers.

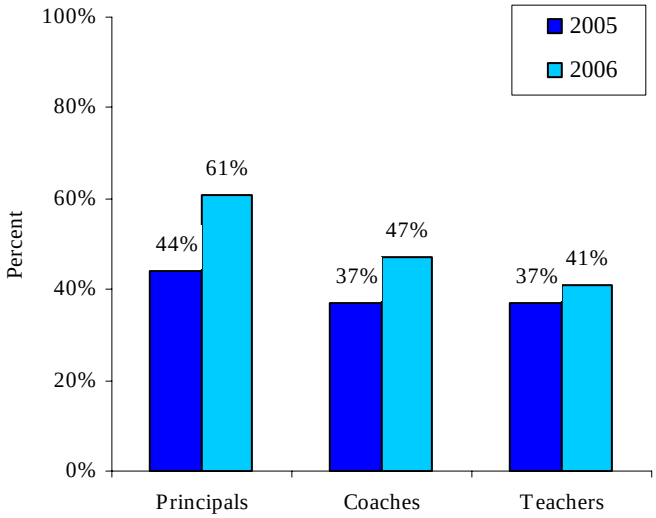

Figure 6-3
Belief that Reading First is Meeting the Needs of ELL Students

Interview data reveal a mix of frustrations and successes in this area. On the positive side, many schools found that Reading First worked well with their ELL students. Coaches mentioned successes with particular Reading First instructional practices – including interventions, practice opportunities, templates, and small group instruction.

> *We have one room that is all ELL students at the beginning of the year. We have seen the biggest growth with them. The program is working great, it must have been developed for them! (Coach)*

> *The Reading First materials and instructional strategies are really helpful and provide a lot of practice for the ELL students. (Coach)*

On the challenges side, many coaches discussed the influx of monolingual Spanish-speaking students, particularly those entering school in second or third grade. Schools cited being "most worried about" this population, as "they come out on the DIBELS as intensive because they don't understand."

> *Things go pretty well in kindergarten. But those students in the third grade who come from Mexico have a challenge because they haven't learned English the correct way. (Coach)*

> *For those who come with some English, the Reading First program does a good job. For those with no English, it's more difficult, there is no intervention for them. (Coach)*

Teachers indicated that materials were a concern; only half of surveyed teachers (47%) felt their school used supplemental intervention materials that were well-matched to the needs of ELL students. Interview data rounded out this picture, with most schools agreeing that the core program alone did not meet the needs of ELL students. However, there were differing opinions on supplemental and intervention programs. Some schools found that ELL-specific materials were helpful, such as the ELL component of their core program or a package such as *Language for Learning*. Some found that materials were too difficult, assuming language skills or vocabulary that students did not yet have, and wanted something more.

Coaches were more likely than teachers to indicate that teacher knowledge and skills were a concern; half of surveyed coaches (52%) felt that teachers at their school had the knowledge and skills necessary to modify and supplement the core program for ELL students. Interviewed coaches expanded on this issue, noting that the degree to which the Reading First met the needs of their ELL students was tied to each teacher's background knowledge and that teachers had to modify materials and instruction. Some coaches at schools with higher proportions of ELL students mentioned that all teachers at their school either had or were in the process of receiving ESL/ELL endorsements.

Inside the Reading First Classroom

This year, evaluators observed 81 classrooms across 27 schools, fairly evenly divided across the four grades (K-3). These observations, in combination with survey responses from coaches and teachers about instruction, help to provide a picture of the delivery of reading instruction in the classroom.

During their site visits, evaluators had limited time in classrooms, between 20 and 30 minutes in three randomly selected classrooms. They spent that time taking detailed notes on instruction

and student activities and later rated each lesson using a rubric and focusing on the following characteristics:

- Lesson clarity
- Explicit modeling and effective questioning
- Monitoring of student understanding and provision of direct feedback to students
- Student engagement and effective use of time

Ratings in these areas were compared to ratings of observations conducted in 2004 and 2005. The following general patterns were evident:

- **Clearly presented lessons** in almost three-quarters of observed classrooms (73%) showed an increase from the first and second years.

- **Strong explicit modeling** in one third of observed classrooms (34%) was very similar to the year before.

- **Use of guided questioning** in half of observed classrooms (49%) represented an increase from the year before.

- **Monitoring of student understanding** and **adjustment of instruction** in over half of observed classrooms (59%) remained similar to the two years before. However, a substantial proportion of classrooms (41%) did not provide clear evidence of this.

- **Provision of direct, frequent and effective feedback** in about half of observed classrooms (54%) showed an increase from the first and second years. However, the remaining half of classrooms (46%) did not provide clear evidence of this.

- **Strong student engagement** in almost two-thirds of observed classrooms (63%) resulted in an increase from the first and years.

All of these characteristics rated during observations overlap in many ways. For example, clearly presented lessons tended to have stronger student engagement, more opportunities for practice, and higher provision of clear and frequent feedback, just as the opposite held true for unclear lessons. Each of these findings is discussed in greater detail, below.

Lesson clarity. Since the first year of Reading First implementation in Arizona, site visitors have seen an increase in the percentage of observed lessons that are definitely clear throughout the lesson, from 60 percent in the first year to 73 percent in 2006 (Figure 6-4). However, lessons were *not* clear in over one-quarter of observed classrooms (27%).

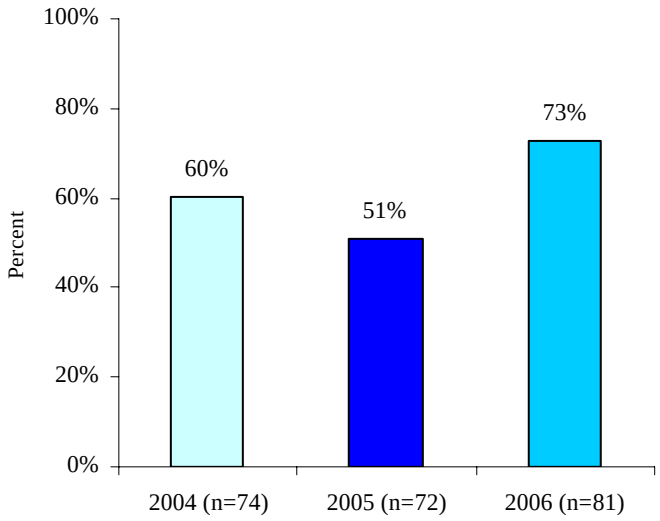

Figure 6-4
Clarity of Observed Lessons, 2004-2006

Scaffolded instruction. Teachers can scaffold student learning by first modeling a task for them, then doing it with them, and then gradually withdrawing so that students learn how to do it themselves. Explicit modeling has been emphasized in many professional development workshops since the beginning of Reading First implementation. Still, site visitors did not expect to witness explicit modeling in every classroom, since students often practice already familiar routines and do not require modeling of every activity every day. In 2006, site visitors noted strong explicit modeling in just over a third (34%) of classrooms observed, very similar to the year before (30%).

However, coaches indicated on surveys that they saw substantially more modeling than observers; 77 percent of coaches reported that they 'usually' or 'always' saw modeling.

Utilization of guided questioning is another strategy that teachers can use instead of, or in addition to, modeling, in order to scaffold students' learning. This practice was observed in 49 percent of the classrooms visited this year, compared to 39 percent in 2005.

Monitoring of student understanding and provision of direct feedback. In order to use classroom instruction time wisely, teachers need to monitor how well students understand the material they are working with and make almost instantaneous judgments about whether students need more practice or are ready to move to something else. They also need to address misunderstandings right away and replace them with correct information.

In 2006, site visitors were just as likely as the year before (59%) to see evidence that teachers were monitoring student understanding during a lesson and adjusting instruction (Figure 6-5). However, a substantial proportion of observed classrooms (41%) did not provide clear evidence of this.

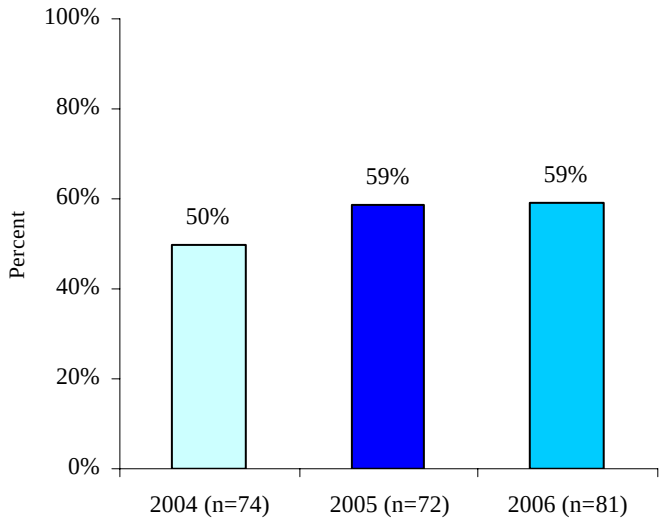

Figure 6-5
Lessons Demonstrating Monitoring of Student Understanding, 2004-2006

Observers also watched the interaction between teachers and students to see if teachers provided direct and frequent feedback to students. When students made errors in their reading, did teachers catch those errors and receive feedback telling them they were correct? This is an area which saw a decrease between 2004 and 2005 but an increase in the percentage of 2006 observations definitely demonstrating effective teacher feedback. However, again, almost half of observed classrooms (46%) did not provide clear evidence of this.

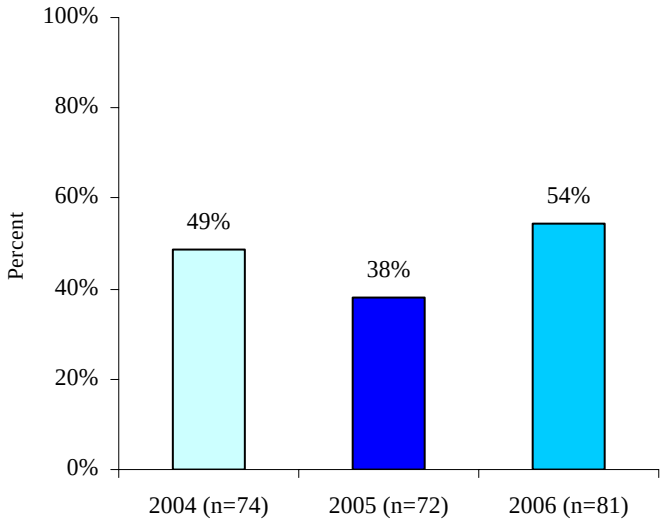

Figure 6-6
Teachers' Provision of Direct Feedback, 2004-2006

Other data also suggest an improvement in this same area. For example, on surveys, 63 percent of coaches reported that they 'usually' or 'always' witnessed teachers immediately re-teaching when students answered incorrectly or were confused, compared to just 53 percent of coaches last year.

Student engagement and effective use of time. Overall in 2006, observers saw strong student engagement in 63 percent of classrooms, a notable increase over the previous years (Figure 6-7).

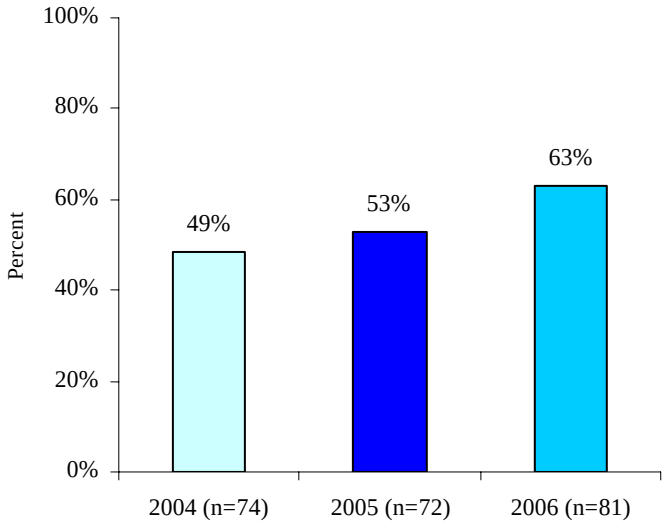

Figure 6-7
Strong Student Engagement in Observed Lessons, 2004-2006

Another way to keep student engagement high is to maintain a lively pace and promote efficient classroom routines so little time is wasted. On surveys, coaches were asked about how regularly they observed the effective use of time during reading – a quick start to the lesson, a lively pace throughout the lesson, and efficient transitions from one activity to another. In general, coaches noted that there had been improvement in all of these areas between the previous year and this year with over eighty percent now using these techniques 'usually' or 'always.' Figure 6-8 summarizes coaches' responses from 2005 and 2006.

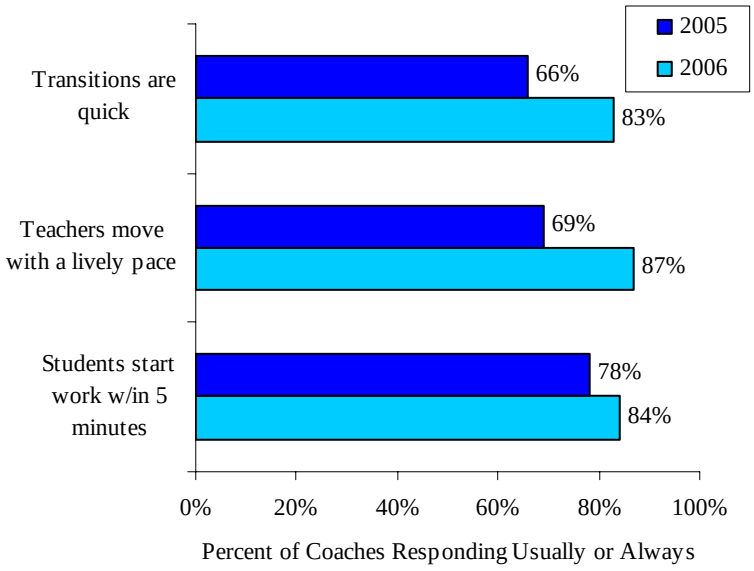

Figure 6-8
Coaches' Perceptions of Teachers' Use of Time in the Classroom

In most observed classrooms, student engagement was acceptable. However, in a handful of observed classrooms (6 of 81), 21 percent or more of students were off-task during the observation on average.

Table 6-4
Average Percentage of Students Off-Task During Observations

Percentage Off-Task	Percentage (Number) of Classrooms (n=81)
0%	30% (24)
1% to 5%	30% (24)
6% to 10%	19% (15)
11% to 15%	11% (9)
16% to 20%	4% (3)
21% or more	7% (6)

Instruction in the Five Components

In its report, the National Reading Panel (2000) identified five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These five components have become the centerpiece of Reading First, providing focus to teacher professional development and a way for schools to think about the different types of knowledge and skills that students need in order to read successfully.

Coaches and teachers painted a fairly positive view of what classroom instruction in the five components looked like at their schools. However, evaluator observation of 81 randomly

selected classrooms showed a less uniform picture regarding instruction in the five components (particularly in vocabulary). These findings are explored in further detail below.

Phonemic Awareness

According to the National Reading Panel, most students require no more than 20 hours of phonemic awareness instruction, usually in kindergarten or the beginning of first grade. Numerous teachers, however, perceived that many students at all grade levels needed daily phonemic awareness work. Fully 64 percent of them said that their students 'usually' or 'always' required daily phonemic awareness instruction, including 41 percent of third-grade teachers.

Observers witnessed few phonemic awareness lessons; just fifteen classrooms (out of 81), most of which were kindergarten and first grade. This is in keeping with the sequencing of core programs and what would be expected, as observations were conducted towards the end of the school year.

Observers were more likely to see phonemic awareness work done as part of whole group instruction than small group instruction, although 64 percent of coaches reported that phonemic awareness instruction 'usually' or 'always' occurred in small group settings.

Phonics

This year, templates designed by the Western Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (WRRFTAC) provided a highly explicit format for modeling and then leading students through the practice of phonics skills (a few templates addressed areas of reading besides phonics, but most addressed phonics). Spring surveys asked both coaches and teachers about the use of these templates. Coaches at 45 percent of schools reported seeing regular use of the templates, although data from teachers suggest more wide-spread use (73% of teachers agreed that their students responded well to the templates).

Broad use of templates may have also improved the consistency of instruction about multi-syllabic words; 63 percent of coaches agreed that "At our school, all teachers use a common approach to teach students to sound out multi-syllabic words."

Evaluators who visited schools this year observed a great deal of phonics instruction; in fact, 52 observed classrooms (out of 81) had at least some phonics instruction. Most of these were kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, although several phonics lessons were observed in second- and third-grade classrooms as well. Overall, phonics lessons were rated more highly than other areas in terms of lesson clarity and student engagement; many of them made effective use of the WRRFTAC templates.

Fluency

According to coaches, at most schools it was common (73-87 percent) to see fluency strategies such as partner reading, repeated and monitored oral reading, and explanations of how/why to read fluently in the classroom (Figure 6-9).

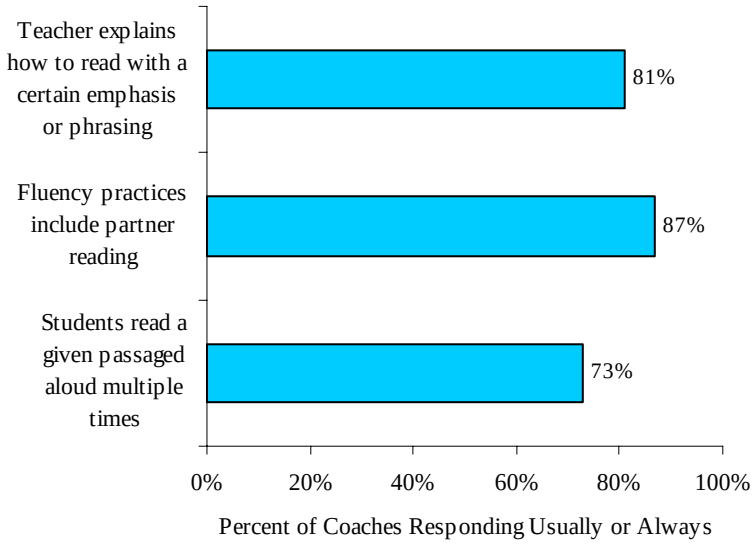

Figure 6-9
Coaches' Observations of Fluency Practices

Observers did see much work on fluency; 31 (of 81) observed lessons included fluency instruction. Within those lessons, observers witnessed teachers modeling fluent reading, pointing out to students their use of tone and emphasis, as in this example:

> *Teacher is working with whole group of second grade students on a new story.*
>
> *Teacher: Ok, I am going to read the next page. Listen. (Teacher reads the page.)*
>
> *Teacher and students choral read the page, robotically. Teacher has them do it again by echoing reading after her, using her intonation.*

Survey responses indicated that most classrooms appropriately utilized independent level text (text that is relatively easy for the reader) for oral reading practice. Four-fifths of coaches (82%) said they usually or always saw this practice, and very few teachers (7%) indicated that students in their reading classroom were frustrated when they practiced oral reading because the text was too difficult.

Evaluators saw oral reading practice that included large group and student-partner work. However, oral reading practice sometimes provided an opportunity for students to easily fall off-

task and "pretend" to follow along by mouthing the words/mumbling or moving their fingers on the page in a random fashion.

Observers also saw the use of fluency timings, in which a student read aloud to the teacher within a one-minute timing; these scores were often part of a classroom or school's progress-monitoring system.

Vocabulary

Coaches reported that they saw evidence of good vocabulary instructional practices, particularly the use of student-friendly definitions and teacher activation of background knowledge (Figure 6-10). However, only about half (48%) indicated that they regularly saw use of examples and non-examples to check that students understand word meaning and usage. Coach reports evidenced no change from the previous year.

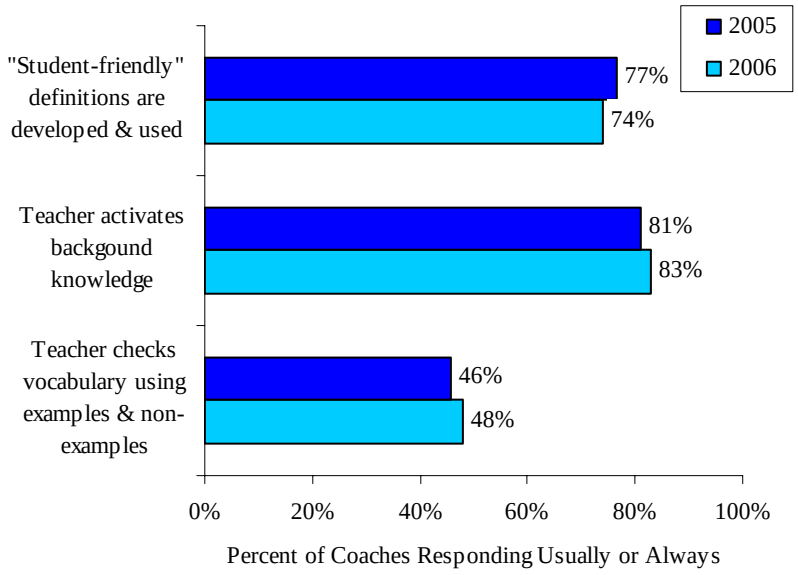

Figure 6-10
Coaches' Observations of Teachers' Vocabulary Instruction

Observers saw 24 lessons (of 81) that included vocabulary instruction. Within those lessons, observers did not witness the use of strong vocabulary practices reported by coaches on surveys. Vocabulary instruction was most often embedded within another type of lesson, often comprehension, rather than as a stand-alone lesson. This was sometimes done in a meaningful way that enhanced the students' understanding of the story, such as pointing out a vocabulary word or pausing to ask students, "What does that word mean?" However, it was also sometimes performed in such a way that vocabulary instruction was rushed. In this example, the teacher tells students the answer rather than soliciting a student response:

Teacher is working with a small group on a new story. They have come across the word 'repack'.

Teacher: Put your finger on the word 'repack.' It means going to pack again. She was not happy with how she packed, so she did it again. 'Re-' means to do something again. What does it mean? Carlos?

Carlos: Again.

In another example, the teacher had the students read the vocabulary words and their definitions to themselves, followed by the students repeating the list of vocabulary words aloud after her; they then were asked to use them in a sentence:

Teacher and students: Shunned, cherished, growth, windmill, ample, furious…

Teacher: Now I need you to choose one of the vocabulary words and use it in a sentence. Marco?

Marco: A windmill is a good source of energy.

Teacher: Good job. Maria?

Maria: I cherished all of my books.

Teacher: Great! (etc.)

Comprehension

According to coaches, comprehension instruction was stronger than the previous year (see Figure 6-11). They reported substantial growth in the proportion of teachers who explicitly modeled comprehension strategies (to 75% from 60%). They also cited an increase in the proportion of teachers who had their students look back in the text to find specific examples to support their responses; two-thirds of teachers now used this method. Coaches reported that, similar to last year, about two-thirds of teachers posed questions that asked for more than basic recall in the promotion of higher-order thinking about text.

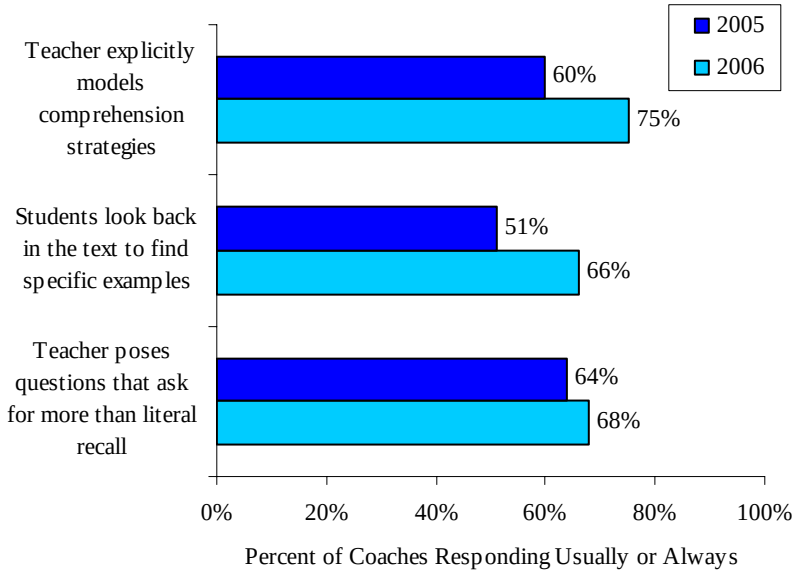

Figure 6-11
Coaches' Observations of Teachers' Comprehension Instruction

Observers saw 24 lessons (of 81) that included comprehension instruction. Within those lessons, observers witnessed the frequent use of predictions as a comprehension strategy; they also saw the use of partner sharing. Very seldom did they see the use of questions that involved higher-order thinking; the use of basic recall questions was much more predominant, as in this third-grade example:

> *Teacher is working with a small group of five students.*
> *Students choral read: A tree can be a home to birds and bugs. They need all the parts of the tree.*
> *Teacher: So what is a tree for birds and bugs?*
> *Students: Home.*
> *Teacher: Which parts?*
> *Students are confused.*
> *Teacher: See the second sentence.*
> *Student: All.*
> *Teacher: Yes, they need all the parts, the leaves and the branches and the trunk, so every part.*
> *Repeat on next page, all read, there is lots of teacher talk with minimal student response.*

However, basic recall questions could also be used in the process of addressing a higher-order question that might be too abstract for students to comprehend initially, as in this first-grade example:

> *Teacher and students (large group) are reading a story.*
> *Teacher: What are they doing to solve the problem? Talk to your neighbor about it.*

Teacher gives time to talk to each other. Reminds them that they should be talking about what the characters are doing now to solve the problem.
Teacher: Ok, eyes on me. After Mr. M found out that Sam was good at canoeing, what did he decide to do?
Student: Get on the canoe with him.
Teacher: What is he doing?
Student: He is solving the problem.
Teacher: How is he solving the problem?
Student: I forgot.
Teacher: What did he decide to do? Did he tell Sam to use the canoe instead of plating his instrument?
Teacher talks students through this with a series of less complicated questions so they are eventually able to answer the larger question of solving the problem.

Provision of Interventions

Interventions are a critical part of the Reading First design, providing additional, targeted, small-group instruction for those students who need more than the core reading program in order to read at grade level. Perceptions of intervention systems indicated that schools felt they had improved over the past year (see Figure 6-12). Between 2005 and 2006, the percentage of teachers, coaches and principals who felt that their school was doing an excellent job of providing interventions increased; the 27 percent jump in the percentage of coaches to 86 percent was particularly strong.

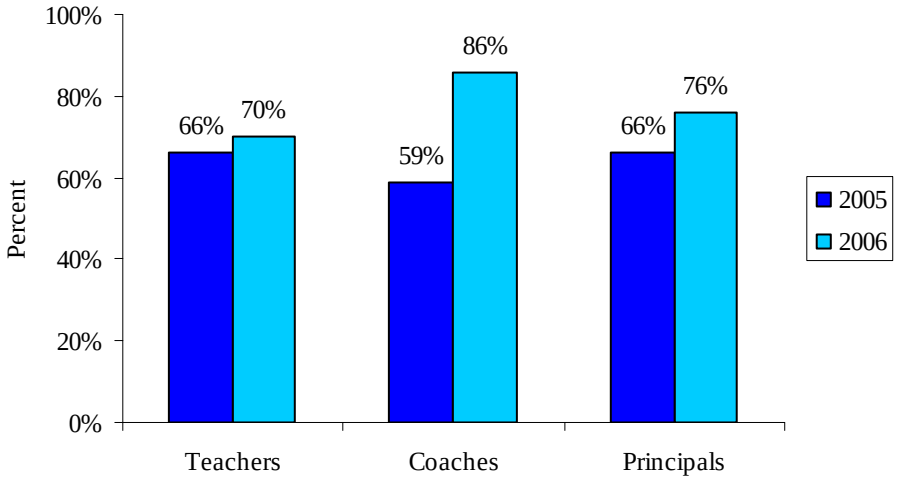

Figure 6-12
Perception of Interventions

This section will explore these findings in greater detail—including who received interventions, who provided them, and the successes and challenges to meeting the needs of all students in this area.

Numbers of Students Receiving Interventions

Table 6-5 reports the number of students served in interventions during the 2005-2006 school year, as reported by the coach. In 2005-2006, a total of 8,817 students received "intensive" interventions (defined as outside the reading block, at least two hours per week for at least six weeks). This represents approximately 34 percent of all K-3 students across the funded schools.[2] In addition, 5,351 students, approximately 20 percent of all K-3 students, received "less intensive" interventions. Overall, this represents a decline from the 2004-2005 school year, both in the number as well as percentage of students receiving either type of intervention.

Table 6-5
Numbers of Students Receiving Interventions

	School Year 2004-2005 (n=68 schools)	School Year 2005-2006 (n=66 schools)
Intensive interventions	9,869 (38% of students)	8,817 (34% of students)
Less intensive interventions	6,392 (24% of students)	5,351 (20% of students)

Coaches indicated that they still were not able to provide interventions to all students who needed them (see Table 6-6). About one-thirds (34%) reported that they were not able to provide interventions to all intensive students; just over half (53%) reported that they were not able to do so for all strategic students. (It should be noted that while many schools said they were not able to serve all students, most of them did provide some type of intervention to most students.)

Table 6-6
Proportion of Eligible Students Receiving Interventions

	Percentage of Schools	
	Not All Students Receive Interventions	All Students Receive Interventions
Students in "strategic" group	34%	66%
Students in "intensive" group	53%	47%

When fewer than 100 percent of eligible students received interventions, the most frequently reported obstacle was insufficient staffing (62%). Others included available space (16%), lack of parental support (12%), and lack of trained staff (9%).

[2] The total number of students in Arizona Reading First for each school year was calculated using the number of students with beginning of year DIBELS scores, fall 2004 and 2005 respectively.

> *We struggle with staffing. To get the job done efficiently, we need, but don't have, a full-time interventionist. There is also a lack of aides. (Coach)*

A related concern that emerged during interviews was scheduling. Several coaches found that finding time in the day amidst other subjects, addressing teacher resistance to pull-outs, and communication between interventionists and classroom teachers were all challenges that they struggled to address in an ongoing manner.

> *Time is a big challenge. Figuring out when to do it in addition to everything else we have to do. (Coach)*

> *When someone is not here, we have no back-up, there are no subs for the interventionists; that puts a kink in the program, and it happens regularly. (Coach)*

When resources to provide interventions were limited, some schools chose to work first with those who were furthest behind, the intensive students. Another school addressed the needs of the "bubble" students—those just below benchmark—first. Finally, others utilized a combination approach that worked with both groups simultaneously.

> *Most of our resources are directed at the intensive and lower strategic. We start with the most needy. (Coach)*

> *We use the data, look at the fence riders; we try to push those who are on the fence over. (Coach)*

> *We approach it in two ways. First, we look at the intensive students; but knowing that 3% of that group will not make adequate growth, we give more time to the group that we know we can make a difference with. So second, we start with the benchmark bubble kids because we know we can get them there. The same goes for those on the strategic bubble. (Coach)*

Materials

Several schools reported selecting intervention materials during the 2005-2006 year. Decisions regarding what to purchase were often made by determining student needs via the DIBELS and other assessments. Many schools reported that decisions were made by the Reading Leadership Team or a similar combination of teachers along with the reading coach and principal. Other decisions were made by the coach and principal together; less frequently the materials were chosen via a district-wide adoption. While some schools reported using data and demonstrations to make these decisions, others were less specific about what needs their new materials met; in the words of one coach, "To be honest, we tend to go in a bit blindly and just go by what we are told."

> *It's generally the kind of decision the Reading Leadership Team makes. In some instances, it's really serendipity. (Coach)*

> *The new intervention materials were chosen by myself and the principal after it was demonstrated. The third grade needed more interventions and this program made the choice easy and obvious. We selected based on need and performance. (Coach)*
>
> *All the choices were made by the district; the district first asked the coaches about our professional opinion. (Coach)*

Evaluator observation of interventions indicated that supplemental programs were used in most interventions (71%); fewer used the core program (29%). Satisfaction with intervention materials was fairly high: 87 percent of coaches and 66 percent of teachers agreed that the intervention materials were well-matched to the needs of their struggling readers. This was a notable increase over the previous year, particularly among coaches.

Group Size

Research suggests that interventions are most effective when delivered to small groups, and that interventions for the most intensive students should be even smaller (Pikulski 1994; Torgesen 2004). The evaluation found that while the majority of interventions in Arizona Reading First schools were delivered to groups of six or fewer students, a notable proportion were delivered to larger size groups (see Figure 6-13).

Across all schools, two-thirds of coaches (66%) reported that at their school, the largest number of students an intervention provider worked with at one time was six or fewer. On the other hand, the remaining coaches (34%) reported that intervention providers at their school worked with groups with a minimum of seven or more students, up to as many as 23 students at one time. Actual observations of interventions during site visits corroborate these data; most groups were comprised of six or fewer students, although groups of seven to 12 were occasionally seen.

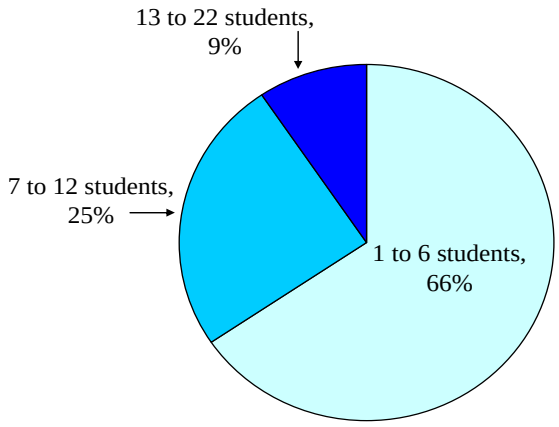

Figure 6-13
Size of Largest Intervention Groups

Larger group sizes in interventions can be problematic for many reasons. Most obviously, they can be a stumbling block in providing the kind of highly tailored instruction that struggling students require. When schools struggle with intervention staffing resources, it might seem more efficient to have one provider work with a larger group; however, it can quickly diffuse the targeted nature and efficacy of the intervention, wasting time.

Staffing

A school's ability to provide effective, targeted interventions is directly linked to the availability of an adequate number of well-trained intervention providers. As shown in Figure 6-14, interventions in Arizona Reading First schools were provided largely by a mix of paraprofessionals (85% of schools), K-3 teachers (76%) and specialists (69%); assessment coordinators were involved to a lesser extent (40%). However, this did not conform to what evaluators witnessed in intervention observations, in which teachers and reading specialists almost exclusively delivered interventions; no paraprofessionals were observed. (Figures in Figure 6-14 sum to over 100% because schools used several different types of staff to provide interventions.)

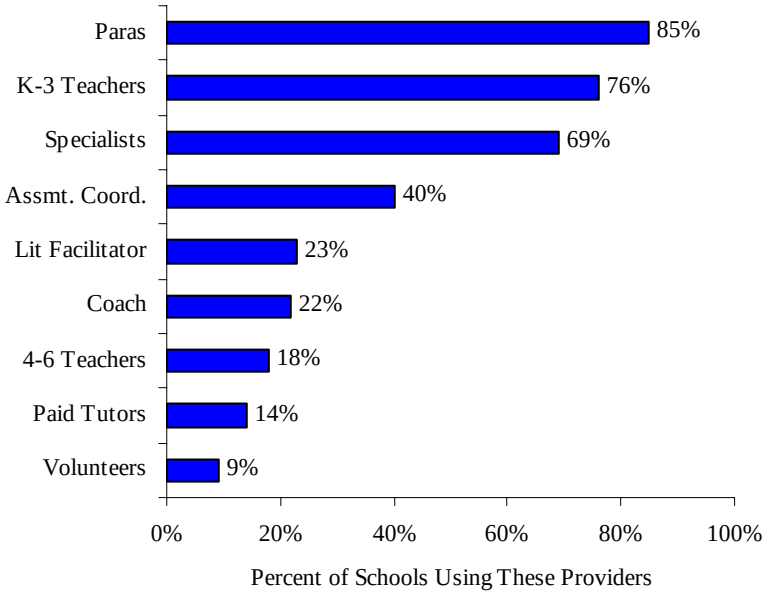

Figure 6-14
Position of Intervention Providers

As noted earlier, at many schools the lack of sufficient staffing posed an obstacle to providing interventions to all eligible students. This was cited by coaches on surveys and in interviews as one of their biggest challenges; in a related finding, only 39 percent of principals said their staffing resources were sufficient to provide interventions to all students who needed them.

Evaluators observed 27 interventions at 27 different schools. While it is important to note that this comparatively small sample of intervention observations is too small to claim representativeness, it is useful in its corroboration of other data.

Training

With so many diverse providers and student needs, training for intervention providers is a critical piece in ensuring the quality, effectiveness, and consistency of interventions within a school and across the project. Confidence in the level of training and preparation among intervention providers was moderately strong; 71 percent of teachers and 86 percent of coaches felt that their school's intervention providers were well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.

To probe deeper into the issue of training, during site visit intervention observations, the evaluators asked intervention providers themselves about what training they had received to provide interventions. These responses reveal that training for intervention providers varied widely, but was generally adequate for interventionists themselves to feel comfortable with their position. Some providers were very highly trained and qualified, with master's degrees in reading or reading certification, while others had little formal background in reading. Most cited a wide array of opportunities, including training from the state, attendance at the Reading First Academies and/or other conferences, publisher-provided training, ongoing support from their reading coach, and district-level training.

However, as stated above, evaluators did not observe, and therefore were unable to interview, any paraprofessionals providing interventions; it is possible that paraprofessionals have more or different needs in this area.

In their own words, intervention providers commented on what *additional* training they felt they needed to provide effective interventions. The most common requests were for ELL resources, publisher training, and updates on research.

> *Because of my background, not a lot. But I am always interested in ongoing professional development and keeping up with new information. (Reading specialist)*

> *I would like more training from the publishers. The state consultant should also provide us with modeling and demonstrations. (Interventionist)*

Intervention Quality

The observations are also useful as an indicator of overall issues relating to quality. In general, the majority of observations provided evidence that:

- Students had ample opportunities for practice (extremely common)
- Intervention providers monitored student understanding (very common)
- Interventions were clearly presented (very common)
- Students were engaged in the intervention lesson (very common)
- Intervention providers gave clear, direct, and frequent feedback (less common)

CHAPTER VII
LEADERSHIP

Role of the District

The ADE envisioned the Local Education Agency (LEA) or district as a source of support for Reading First schools and principals in their implementation of the grant. According to the ADE, the LEA should provide clear support to schools' Reading First goals and plans. In addition to assisting with financial elements of the grant, LEAs were encouraged to provide support through cooperation and flexibility, such as extending the window for purchasing intervention materials to allow for thoughtful decision making.

There were twenty-six LEAs each with their own representative specifically designated as a Reading First. Twenty-one of these returned surveys. Their districts ranged from as few as one school to as many as 76 with nearly thirteen schools being the average.

The representatives themselves had a wide ranging role in the district outside of the grant with over sixty percent being made up of assistant superintendents, curriculum specialists and literacy specialists. The official allocated time spent on the project ranged from zero FTE to being a full-time coordinator. The average allotted percent FTE was just over 27 percent. In the past, LEA representatives had complained they were spending more time than anticipated. This year their actual FTE percentage was only about eight percent higher than their officially allocated time.

Over time, the State has been more insistent that districts' representatives attend coaches and principal meetings. As noted in Table 7-1, in most cases the LEA representative was able to attend these meetings as over 90 percent of them claimed to have attended at least three such meetings. An even more positive development was that a large majority (80%) were satisfied with their attendance with only 20 percent of those saying these meetings were only "sometimes useful."

Table 7-1
District Attendance at Meetings

In 2005-2006, how frequently did you attend the following activities?	Did not attend	Once	Twice	3 times	4 + times
2005 Summer Academy	30%	70%	--	--	--
Statewide coach and principal meetings	--	--	10%	33%	57%
State meetings for district representatives	5%	5%	10%	21%	58%

Table 7-2
District Coordinators Usefulness of Attendance

How useful, to you as Reading First district coordinator, was your attendance at the following:	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Some-times Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful
2005 Summer Academy	--	8%	8%	46%	39%
Statewide coach and principal meetings	--	--	20%	65%	15%
State meetings for district representatives	--	5%	16%	63%	16%

Last year most district representatives reported that along with grant administration and management, the biggest expansion in their role was their involvement in the assessment data aspect of the grant. Survey results listed below indicate that representatives continued to perform that function, plus a large an array of many other tasks. Looking at Table 7-3, it lists the duties of support according to both the LEA representatives and the principals. On the whole there was widespread agreement in their responses. In fact seven of the items had an over 80 percent agreement among both parties. Conversely, two areas pointed toward a distinctive perception difference in what the districts claimed to have supported and how the principals perceived their involvement. Indeed, there was a 20 percent difference between the two groups on analyzing reading assessment and providing technical assistance.

Table 7-3
Ways LEA Supported You with Reading First

	LEA	Principal
By providing grant management	100%	94%
By providing grant management	95%	81%
By monitoring grant implementation	95%	81%
By assisting with proposal writing	90%	82%
By supporting intervention programs	90%	82%
By supporting the core reading program	90%	87%
By having a district staff member designated as the Reading First "go-to" person	86%	89%
By analyzing student reading assessment data	86%	61%
By providing professional development that is aligned with Reading First	76%	69%
By providing technical assistance to support school change	76%	56%
By facilitating district-wide Reading First meetings for principals	67%	71%
By providing overall curriculum guidance	67%	63%
By modifying district requirements to align with Reading First	62%	61%
By facilitating district-wide Reading First meetings for coaches	57%	69%
By educating and galvanizing the community	24%	29%
Other	10%	5%

Certainly based on Table 7-4, the LEA representatives had a good sense of their expectations and understanding of their role. Buy-in was unanimous; communication from the state was rated as positive by three-fourths of respondents. A near 70 percent majority of the representatives expressed that the grant had greatly influenced the non-Reading First Schools. Still, there was a minority of five districts that reported tension with their non-Reading First schools.

Table 7-4
District Support and Understanding

	Percent of District Coordinators Agree or Strongly Agree
The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	95%
The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.	76%
I strongly support the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	100%
Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	10%
The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable and appropriate.	90%
Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	69%*
There are tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools in our district.	25%*

* includes only those districts where this was applicable

Table 7-5 goes into greater detail on the specific influence the grant has had in districts that included non-Reading First schools. Not surprisingly, the DIBELS assessment system, core reading program and 90 minute reading block saw their way into the most non-Reading First schools. Still, a majority of the same block of schools end up having a reading coach and attending on-going professional development.

Table 7-5
Districts Influence on Reading and Non-Reading First Schools

	Non-Reading First schools		
	No non-RF schools	Some non-RF schools	All non-RF schools
Use DIBELS for benchmark assessments three times a year	--	12%	88%
Use the same core reading program as Reading First schools	12%	12%	75%
Have a 90-minute reading block in K-3	--	38%	62%
Have a K-3 reading coach	31%	25%	44%
Provide or attend ongoing, high-quality professional development in reading	6%	56%	38%
Systematically progress monitor students	19%	50%	31%
Provide systematic interventions for struggling students outside the 90-minute reading block	12%	69%	19%

Looking at the question of tension between Reading First and non-Reading First schools, as mentioned in the survey data, one in four districts experienced such tension with eight respondents commenting such issues. In the districts that did have strain, one commentator mentioned a sense of the "haves and have nots" that could describe a few of the others' comments as well. According to a few LEA representatives, non-Reading First schools claimed that they receive less attention because they do not perform as well. Some representatives said the schools felt that they are expected to perform at the same levels without the same tools.

> *Non-Reading First schools feel they have to operate under the same guidelines as Reading First schools, but without the support. They have truly become the red-headed step children of the district and they know it and don't like it! (* LEA Representative)

> *Jealousy of success, then they look for excuses by non-Reading First Schools… instead of asking Reading First staff how they feel about the grant. Too much of the time non-Reading First staff have listened to people outside the district. (*LEA Representative)

Looking next to the degree at which districts supported Reading First schools in Table 7-6, little changed in the survey data from a year ago. Three-fourths of principals described their district as "very supportive and appropriately involved." The only real change was the decrease in "supportive but 'hands-off'" and a slight upswing in districts that were more directive in their approach. Identical to last year, the question of there being district's initiatives opposed to Reading First was seen in only a small fraction of LEAs.

Table 7-6
Principals View of the LEA Support

In your view, which of the following **best** describes your **District's level of support for Reading First:** ***(select one)***	**Percent of Principals**	
	2005	**2006**
Highly directive, perhaps overly involved	3%	10%
Very supportive and appropriately involved	74%	75%
Supportive but "hands-off"	19%	11%
Not involved but not in opposition	3%	11%
Not supportive and opposed to or skeptical about Reading First	0%	2%
Major initiatives in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First	**Percent Agree or Strongly Agree**	
	2005	**2006**
Assessment coordinators	11%	10%
Principals	11%	10%
Coaches	14%	14%

The interview data generally concurred with the surveys as about six in ten principals interviewed had a completely positive relation with their district. One of the most commonly cited supports by principals was "being sympathetic to our needs."

> *They do an excellent job because our coordinator is very proactive, supportive, and knowledgeable. Our district staff provides support to the school and they monitor each school extremely well and work on staff development.* (Principal)
>
> *The District has managed to institute early release time for Professional Development, facilitated district wide meetings and helps us with the spending of the money including attempts to leverage for more*. (Principal)

Other principals mentioned the relationship was not totally satisfactory with improvement still needed. Nevertheless, only three were completely negative about the relationship. Those with issues most often cited the need for more communication contrasting those with a straight positive view who often noted that the district meetings were a real asset. The negative principals were also concerned about Reading First diverting funds from the normal school budget. These were typical of some of the issues.

> *The district doesn't help that much. They're supportive but do not lend a hand or any assistance.* (Principal)
>
> *They have been sufficient but at times a bit too heavy handed. They come on too strong by being highly directive, perhaps overly involved* (Principal)

Role of the Principal

Principals have a crucial role to play in the implementation of Reading First at the school level. The role has only increased in both scope and visibility as the grant has progressed. They had the authority and position to designate Reading First as a top priority in each school and to set the tone for successful grant implementation. The principal should be involved in the day-to-day work of the grant. As an instructional leader, the principal should be visible in the classrooms, observing instruction and providing feedback. The principal was also expected to give a consistent message that supports the program, work closely with the reading coach, and be able to lead a collaborative team in implementing school wide reading goals and objectives.

Below are some of the demographics taken from the survey data (unless otherwise noted). Of interest is the number of principals who were new to their school; twelve principals fit that description. What that entailed was having a segment of them behind their peers in the evolution of the grant. This included missing two or more years of leadership training, building buy-in with teachers and reading knowledge based on SBRR.

The breakouts on the continuing and new principals and their years of experience follow: (Number = 73)

- New Principals: 16.4% (12 principals)
- Continuing: 83.7% (61 principals)

Number of years have you been the principal at this school (including this year)

- Range: 1- 24 years

- Average: 7.3 years (SD = 5.6 years)
- More than half (57%) had 6 or fewer years of experience

Total years of principal experience you have (including this year)

- Range: 1-22 years
- Average: 4.8 years (SD = 3.5 years)
- Slightly more than half (52%) had 4 or fewer years at this school

When interviewed, the principals were asked to explain what the state expected from them in regards to the grant. They described a wide range of responsibilities relating to Reading First. The principals believed that they were expected to support the program in all aspects, including classroom visits, documentation, monitoring the teachers and coaches, providing needed materials, and being the "driving force" behind the program as instructional leaders. Additional responsibilities mentioned by some principals included overseeing the Reading First budget and planning plus ensuring needed professional development for staff.

As the expectations for principals' responsibility has increased with additional time being required, more principals were struggling to meet that expectation. According to the site visit interviews, just slightly more than two-thirds of the principals found that fulfilling all the varied aspects of the State's expectations was a difficult challenge. This is in contrast to last year when only one-third of the respondents gave similar feedback. In fact, some of those who stated they were meeting all of the State's expectations were only able to meet them under less than ideal circumstances. Perhaps the most common statement was that too much is expected of them to do for Reading First on top of their regular duties as they "do not get a break from it." Some were able to get their expectations met but under lots of pressure and with "less than perfect" results. They found it difficult to give the attention desired to every classroom because there were so many of them. Several principals commented on this aspect:

> *You get buried in paperwork. You can only do it for so long and keep up your energy up before it crushes you.* (Principal)

> *I still find it a challenge to make into the classroom, but it's not unrealistic.* (Principal)

> *At times I feel it is extremely difficult because we are a K-9 school with two pre-schools and I feel I didn't take care of them because of my Reading First responsibilities. That's not a complaint, it's a fact.* (Principal)

The implementation checklist indicated that principals were on target performing the activities set-out by the state. As reported by the SRSs, all but one principal ensured that DIBELS data were collected into the data management system. Along the same lines, the checklist responses indicated that just over ninety-three percent of the SRSs rated the principals as providing a master schedule that protected a minimum of 90 uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction.

The survey data of the respondents matched that of the specialists' checklist. The principal was clearly viewed as instructional leader and visible advocate of reading by both the teachers and coaches. Unfortunately the principal interview data reveals this was accomplished with much

duress. In regards to Reading First putting excessive emphasis on the involvement of principals, here different trends emerge from among the coaches and teachers. Coaches were more positive in reporting a ten point decline to 21 percent regarding an *excessive* emphasis on principal involvement. In contrast, teachers had a small uptake to 28 percent with the opinion of *excessive* principal involvement. Only 18 percent of the principals reported an excessive emphasis on their involvement with Reading First.

Table 7-7
View of Principal in Reading First

	Percent of Agree/Strongly Agree 2005 and 2006					
	Teachers		Coaches		Principals	
	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005
Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	86%	89%	91%	94%	--	--
I feel that Reading First is putting excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	28%	23%	21%	31%	18%	--

Table 7-8 data look at the principals' leadership role and grant responsibilities in terms of attending meetings. Overall, principals appear to be performing this function as the state intended. A full 95 percent of respondents attended a Reading Leadership Team meeting at least once a month. While granted there are now more meetings to attend, almost half of the principals were able to attend grade level meetings at least 2 to 3 times a month, and another 42 percent attended at least once per month. Only a mere 10 percent attended grade level meetings once or a few times per year.

Table 7-8
Principal Meeting Attendance

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
you attend RLT meetings?	--	5%	64%	14%	14%	3%
each grade level hold grade-level meetings (on average, across grades)?	--	--	13%	33%	52%	2%
you attend grade-level meetings about reading?	--	10%	42%	32%	17%	--

Despite the highly favorable survey and checklist data, there remained a small minority of the Reading First principals who were failing to live up the expectations of the grant. The reading specialists indicated in the focus group that the main challenges dealt with various leadership

issues at certain schools. The most difficult obstacle faced by the schools was instability of personnel at all levels but especially at the reading coach and principal levels. Even for some schools where the principal did not change, there were instances cited where the principal still would not fully use the specialist and their skills.

> *Principals needed training in organizing their environment and leadership style to enable them to have more time to spend on reading, not just crisis management with something else. They should have had time to be in the classroom more than they were.* (State Reading Specialist)

> *We suffered from a top down approach to leadership. Trust level suffered this year as the principal tended to point fingers and divide the teachers. The program depends on them to work.* (Reading Coach)

One of the activities the State emphasized was getting the principals in the classroom for observations. Here, the principal provides constructive feedback to teachers based on observations and walk-thrus by using a standardized form developed by WestED. The goal was to provide evidence of teachers' use of effective instructional strategies.

The method in which the principals selected teachers for walk-thrus varied. Some principals had a set schedule so that they go around to every grade level, others had no schedule, choosing randomly but still making sure to see everyone, still others choose which teachers to see based on performance reports given by the reading coaches.

The method by which they observed teachers differed greatly between the principals as well. Some used the district-approved checklist to guide them through observations, take notes, use program-approved checklists and forms, look for student engagement, "script the teacher's and students actions." Others were far more informal merely dropping in on a whim without the intension of taking formal notes.

> *There are three types of observations, 1) walk-thrus, 2) informal observations, and 3) formal observations. All are done throughout the month so not all teachers will get all 3 types. If there is a teacher with difficulties, then the principal and reading coach will spend more time in this class.* (Principal)

> *I watch the kids as much as the teachers. I often talk to students to see if they know what the objective of the lesson is. I use a NCR form for feedback and then I leave. The teacher is given a copy and I put it on their desk.* (Principal)

Almost all of the principals reported feeling more comfortable observing teachers this year than last (see Table 7-9). In fact nearly 90 percent of the respondents reported as such, an increase of over ten points from the previous school year.

Table 7-9
Principals Comfort with Classroom Observations

	Percent of Principals Agree or Strongly Agree	
	2004-05	**2005-06**
I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	76%	87%

Principals reported (on surveys) the number of minutes per week that they spent time observing teachers during the reading block: (n = 53)

- Range: 7 - 450 minutes per week
- Average: 168.3 minutes (SD =100.7 minutes)
- 15% observed 1.0 hour or less (60 or fewer minutes)
- 47% observed 2.5 hours or less
- 75% observed 4.5 hours or less

Principals also reported (on surveys) the average number of minutes per week they provided feedback to teachers after such an observation

- Range: 2 - 300 minutes per week
- Mean = 80.2 minutes (SD = 66.3 minutes)
- About half (54%) spent 1 hour or less providing feedback
- About three-fourths (73%) spent almost 2 hours (1.8 hour) or less providing feedback

In site-interviews, the principals almost always reported giving feedback with twenty of the twenty-seven indicating they "usually or always" provide such information to teachers afterwards. The principals varied between providing face-to-face feedback, either directly after the observation or by setting up a meeting, and leaving a written form or carbon-copy of the checklist behind. Some did both and some did not give any personal feedback but had meetings in which the problem areas were addressed to the teachers as a whole.

> *In the past there was a lot of secret stuff so I do everything out in the open. Everybody knows everything that's going on. I do informal meetings as in they will come in with questions and just one teacher I've had do formal meetings on.* (Principal)

> *More feedback is between the Reading Coach and myself on what we saw. My part is ultimately only a small sheet of paper. Doing the performances evaluations has clouded the processes in the sense that I had to complete before I could give constructive feedback.* (Principal)

Looking at the implementation checklist in Table 7-10, over 70 percent of principals were able to consistently observe in classrooms. Slightly less were able to consistently give constructive feedback. Nevertheless, observations remained the area in which principals had the largest difficulty fulfilling expectations according to both SRS and the principals themselves. In fact according to the SRS checklist, the top priority item for attention remained the function of the principal giving feedback to teachers with regards to observations. Still, this was an

improvement over last year where all three of the top priority items dealt with teacher observations.

Table 7-10
SRS Implementation on Principal Observation

		11-50% of the time		51-90% of the time		91-100% of the time	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The principal observes reading instruction in each K-3 classroom to ensure research-based instruction is sustained.	Spr. '06	4	6%	16	22%	53	73%
	Fall '05	6	9%	13	19%	47	70%
The principal provides constructive feedback to all teachers at least once a month based on LEA observations and/or walk-thurs and assessment data.	Spr. '06	5	7%	19	26%	46	63%
	Fall '05	5	8%	11	17%	46	70%

The survey data shown in Table 7-11 indicated a direct contrast to the SRS implementation checklist responses where teachers felt far less of an impact with regards to the principals' ensuring through observations that research based instruction was sustained. Over 40 percent of teachers noted that the principal was only in their classroom at most once or a few times. The site based interviews of the principal indicated, as well, that two-thirds of respondents on average only observed teachers once. Furthermore, not even 60 percent of teachers indicated that the principal had given constructive feedback once or a few times, including eight-percent who indicated "never."

Table 7-11
Teachers View of Principals' Classroom Observation

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	2%	40%	25%	22%	10%	1%

Table 7-11, cont.
Teachers View of Principals' Classroom Observation

This year, how helpful was…	Percent of Teachers Responding 'Helpful' or 'Very Helpful'	
	2004-05	2005-06
Feedback on your instruction provided by the principal after observation of your classroom?	75%	77%

Reading Coach

Reading First foresaw reading coaches playing an important role in initiating school and classroom-level change. While their position involves some leadership and collaboration with the principal, their primary responsibility was to support and mentor teachers as they adopted research-based instructional practices and materials in their reading classrooms. Coaches were informed by the ADE that about eighty percent of their time should be spent in the classroom and/or working directly with teachers.

In addition, coaches were to play a leadership role on the Reading Leadership Team, help to plan the logistics to establish a school wide intervention system, and support the implementation of the school's reading plan. In collaboration with the principal and assessment team, coaches were also expected to assist with assessment and analysis of data and help teachers make instructional and grouping decisions using data.

Background on this group of reading coaches included 18 of the 73 who were brand new to the position at their respective school. This should have been a big concern as they would be much farther behind in peers. The implications for these new coaches was the real need to start with the very basic "how to coach" training. Even those coaches with experience but moving to another Reading First school had to spend the first months learning the new culture, building trust, etc. This meant that implementation at these schools might have been at a different pace than other schools, despite expectations to the contrary. It also could be a key element in why certain schools lagged behind others in regards to implementation of the grant. This group could have greatly benefited from specific technical assistance to remedy this issue.

The survey data also showed that 22 percent of the respondents had another coach who worked at the same school. Ninety-two percent of the coaches were full-time. A breakdown of the demographics of the reading coaches follows:

Total years of coaching experience you have (including this year)

- Range: 1– 22 years
- Average: = 3.2 (SD = 3.0 years)
- One-third of coaches (35%) had 1 or 2 years coaching experience

Years as a reading coach at this school (including this year)

- Range: 1 – 12 years
- Average: = 2.5 years (SD = 1.6 years)
- 2 out of 5 coaches (44%) had 1 or 2 years of coaching at this school

Years you have worked at this school (in any capacity, including this year)

- Range: 1– 40 years
- Average: = 7.1 years (SD = 7.0 years)
- About 50 percent of coaches (51%) had worked at their school for 4 or fewer years

As a reading coach, hours per week you work at this job on average

- Range: 8 - 73 hours
- Average: 43.6 hours (SD = 13.2 hours)
- Two-thirds spent less than 48 hours working

According to the implementation checklist data shown in Table 7-12, reading coaches were overwhelmingly performing up to the standards set by the state. Of the eight items that dealt with the coach, seven of them showed that over 90 percent of the schools were successfully completing these functions. This included two items, assisting in implementation of the core and monitoring of research based practices, which were performed in all Reading First Schools.

Table 7-12
Implementation Checklist on Coaches' Functions

	Percent Implemented Spring 06
The coach creates and maintains a schedule/log for coaching teachers.	93%
The reading coach documents the assistance he/she is providing to all K-3 teachers.	93%
The coach assists the assessment teams in administering, scoring, sharing, analyzing and using data for instructional decisions.	99%
The coach assists in the identification and implementation of K-3 interventions for each grade level.	97%
The coach assists all K-3 teachers with adjustments to instruction based on data.	93%
The coach assists in the ongoing implementation of the core reading program for all K-3 teachers.	100%
For all K-3 teachers, the coach assists the principal in monitoring the ongoing use of research-based practices with approved materials.	100%

Based on their observations at the schools, site visitors were asked to assess the reading coaches' performance and expenditure of their time. Visitors responded that most of the coaches (81%) were doing what they were supposed to be doing: observing in the classroom, performing follow-up activities, making suggestions, setting up interventions, analyzing data, monitoring students' progress and modeling. Four coaches (15%) appeared not to be spending their time

working as an effective reading coach. Only one coach (4%) seemed to spend the majority of her time on paperwork and muddling over DIBELS scores.

> *The reading coach seems to have a good rapport with the teachers. The reading coach focuses on helping teachers improve their instruction and helps the principal make decisions about changes to the school or curriculum based upon data analysis.* (Site Visitor)

> *This reading coach seems to have great support from all the teachers. She has had a positive influence on the teachers and she seems to help guide rather than direct the teachers.* (Site Visitor)

> *Don't have a clue but it's not productive. She doesn't work as a reading coach and this is her second Reading First school with the same dissatisfaction.* (Site Visitor)

Overall, reading coaches stated in survey responses (see Table 7-13) that they continued to feel their role was clearly defined by the state. Most notable was the considerable increase in the percent of coaches reporting that the teachers understood their role more clearly.

Table 7-13
Reading Coach Role

	Percent of Coaches Agree or Strongly Agree	
	2004-05	**2005-06**
My role as the reading coach is clearly defined.	86%	83%
Most teachers at my school understand the role of the reading coach.	59%	84%

Reading coaches were responsible for many aspects of grant implementation and management. From a list of 14 responsibilities shown in Table 7-14, coaches were asked to choose how many hours they spent per week per task. Based on the average 43 hour work week outlined by them in surveys, the percentage of time on each task was computed. One figure that seems rather high remains the coaches' time spent on assessment tasks as these activities took up nearly 20 percent of their time. Of the non-grant related tasks, only one or two coaches were spending any real time subbing or performing bus duty.

However, the implementation checklist data in Table 7-15 directly contradict the coaches' own numbers as far as percent of time coaching teachers. The SRS indicated over 80 percent of the coaches achieving the state's goal. While the coaches' own list of activities in Table 7-14 was "observing, demonstrating, and providing feedback to teachers," it only neared 27 percent. This presents a figure well below the 80 percent required by the State. The interview data substantiated this finding as many respondents mentioned this as an expectation they failed to meet. Besides assessment work, over ten percent of their time was dedicated to paper work which could hamper their ability to meet the required time expected of them in the classroom.

80% in the classroom is just not doable. There are times where I make other commitments that do not allow me the time to meet that expectation. (Reading Coach)

I don't' know if there is something I can do to get up to that 80 percent level? I'm confused, that's my issue. (Reading Coach)

Table 7-14
Reading Coach Tasks by Percent of Average Total Hours Worked

	Percent of Hours	Standard Deviation
Observing, demonstrating, providing feedback to individual grade K-3 teachers	27%	8
Assessment (entering data, creating charts, administration, looking at results)	20%	--
Paperwork	11%	4
Planning for meetings	8%	3
Training groups of grade K-3 teachers	7%	4
Planning interventions	6%	3
Providing interventions directly to students	6%	4
Attending professional development	5%	3
Attending meetings	4%	3
Covering or subbing for teachers	2%	4
Observing, demonstrating, providing feedback to individual grade 4-6 teachers	2%	4
Bus/recess duty	2%	1
Other	2%	2

Table 7-15
Implementation Checklist on Reading Coaches Time Coaching

		40-59% of coach's time		60-79% of coach's time		80% or more of coach's time	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The coach spends time coaching K-3 teachers in reading instruction.	Spr. '06	3	4%	8	11%	60	82%
	Fall '05	3	5%	11	17%	51	77%
	Diff.	0	-1%	-3	-6%	+9	+5%

According to the site-based interviews, coaches believed they were expected to be mediators between the parties of the teachers, state, and leadership (principals, LEA) as well as representatives of each school along with their other activities. Many also expressed the concern that perhaps too much was expected of them in the performance of their duties. A few were under the impression that they were supposed to be "watchdogs" rather than facilitators of the

grant and that perhaps their role as coach might be seen as a means to undermine the teacher. On the other hand, there seemed to be just as many coaches who saw themselves as aides to the teachers in implementing the Reading First program which fit perfectly with what the state had proposed.

Just over half of those coaches interviewed felt they were meeting their expectations, but sometimes taking tasks beyond the expectations in the process. Time remained a concern with a large segment of the coaches. The expectations often depended on the school as to whether or not they did more than just Reading First. In one school the principal made sure that the Reading First coach did only Reading First while in other schools they were asked to substitute teach ESL; one was asked to interview for new faculty and in another school the coaches felt they were not allowed to do enough. Several times the coaches reported taking on extra responsibility pertaining to Reading First because the original guidelines, although not saying it was expected of them to do it, did not specify who would do what, such as budgeting and ordering materials. The following are a few typical comments given by the coaches.

> *I have trouble getting orders completed in a timely fashion and the paper work ends up staying on my desk too long.* (Reading Coach)
>
> *I am to pretty much get everything done as they are good about not giving me extra duties.* (Reading Coach)
>
> *It varies from month to month, from week to week if I can fulfill those expectations. I am always juggling my time.* (Reading Coach)

The survey data addressed just how much the principal and coach worked well together. The data in Table 7-16 show that 90 percent of coaches and all but one principal felt they had an effective partnership.

Table 7-16
Reading Coach and Principal Relationship

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree			
	Principals		Coaches	
	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06
The coach/principal and I work together effectively on Reading First.	--	97%	90%	90%

The survey data presented in Table 7-17 indicated the teachers' response on the frequency of coach observation and feedback. Seventy percent of the respondents noted they were observed at least once a month, a slight two point decrease from the school year before. However, within that range, the numbers skewed closer to the once a month where the data indicated a slight decrease in overall observations. Observations saw similar numbers with 64 percent of teachers indicating they were provided feedback at least once a month. This was down four points from last year with the range again closer to once a month than more frequently.

Table 7-17
Frequency of Coach Observation

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
The reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	3%	26%	29%	29%	11%	1%
The reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	7%	28%	27%	25%	11%	1%

Teachers indicated (see Table 7-18) that for the most part the coaches were helpful. This was almost identical to the data from last year. Roughly three-fourths of teaches believed the coaches' observation feedback, assistance providing interventions, and demonstrating lessons were again helpful to them.

Table 7-18
Teacher's Perception of the Helpfulness of the Coach

How helpful was…	Percent of Teachers	
	Usually/Always	
	04-05	05-06
Feedback on your instruction provided by the coach after observation of your classroom.	78%	77%
Assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions.	77%	77%
Assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions.	77%	73%
Demonstration lessons given by your reading coach.	76%	78%

The most common response from coaches' interviews regarding the best aspect of their job was working with the teachers and seeing improvement come to the schools. They felt they had been able to bring about a palpable change for the better in the level of teaching and learning at their schools. These are some very typical statements from the coaches.

> *The coach reported the best aspect of her job is seeing the growth of teachers. "If I left tomorrow the teachers would still do a super job.*" (Reading Coach)

> *I feel this job has given me a better big picture of how the school works. I have gotten to know, for the first time, how the other teachers really work in the classroom, something you never learn when you are a teacher. Also I was able to get to know more of the children, so I feel a greater connection to the school.* (Reading Coach)

> *The use of data and the way I can interpret that data and take it back to the teachers and explain it to them. They can look at the book and the students and how the are reading and assess the students*. (Reading Coach)

As for coaches' responses to the worst aspects of their job, they mainly centered on the social environment of the school. Resistant teachers and cliques seem to be the largest draw-back to the job. Some coaches felt alienated from the teachers who perceived them to be there as evaluators instead of helpers. Others felt too constrained by the expectations and guidelines of the program. The following represent some of the responses from the coaches.

> *The culture of the teachers has been impossible where they water down the Core and lower the expectations by doing the "poor me" routine*. (Reading Coach)

> *Bringing the information in and not having the teachers be as receptive as I would have like to be as it appears they are resistant to change. Teachers look at data and they see it as just more work.* (Reading Coach)

> *Teachers haven't seen the big picture enough, that this is the way education is going (data driven). Even now some don't accept it.* (Reading Coach)

Meetings and Collaboration

Reading Leadership Team

One of the requirements from the beginning set by the grant was for each school to a establish Reading Leadership Team (RLT) that would bring teacher representatives together with the principal, coach and assessment coordinator to oversee the implementation of Reading First. The team was expected to serve as a center for shared decision making about the school's and students' needs in reading. The team was also to regularly look at data together, analyze it and discuss ways to share it constructively with school staff. It was the state's intension that this group would be a strong decision making body where meaningful discussion took place. The majority of principals (85%), coaches (88%) and teachers (73%) felt that participating in Reading First helped their school develop a more collaborative culture. This section will explore this finding in greater detail

According to the coaches' survey responses, schools continued to meet the Reading First requirement of having the Reading Leadership Team meetings at least once a month. In fact only sixteen percent of the coaches revealed that their school was not meeting that obligation. Conversely, nearly a quarter of the coaches' indicated they were meeting more than once a month.

Table 7-19
Regularity of Reading Leadership Team Meetings

How often does your school have RLT meetings	Coaches
More than once a week	2%
Once a week	16%
Every other week	5%
Once a month	62%
Every other month	8%
Once or a few times a year	8%
Never	0%

Table 7-20 findings compare the responses of principals, coaches, and teachers when asked about their perception of the environment within their Reading Leadership Team meetings. The majority of all respondents were positive in responding that all viewpoints were welcomed and reasons behind the decisions were discussed. Differing viewpoints were expressed, however, between the leadership (principals and coaches) and the teachers in regards to the primary purpose of the meetings. Teachers were twice as likely as the other two groups to indicate that "announcements or to share information from the state" was the primary purpose of the meetings.

Table 7-20
Environment of Reading Leadership Team Meetings

At my school's **Reading Leadership Team** meetings…	**Principals**	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
all participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	100%	94%	88%
we discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	97%	96%	81%
the primary purpose is to make announcements or share information from the state.	20%	22%	44%

Teachers whom were on the Reading Leadership Team were asked on surveys what topics were discussed at the meetings (see Table 7-21). Clearly the exchanging of information on the reading program and talking over assessment data were the topics that dominated the proceedings with nearly ninety percent for each category. Mirroring the survey data, the Implementation Checklist data reported that 85 percent of the teams were discussing intervention plans. On the other end of the survey data, sustainability was mentioned by only a third of the respondents as a topic typically discussed.

Table 7-21
Topics Discussed in Reading Leadership Team Meetings

Following topics do you typically discuss at RLT meetings	Teachers
Talking about school-wide reading assessment data	89%
Exchanging information about what is going on at the school in reading	89%
Receiving information from the coach and principal about what is going on with Reading First at the state level (i.e. from their "monthly meetings")	79%
Talking about student-level reading assessment data	75%
Making decisions about instruction within or across grades	66%
Planning special reading events, family literacy activities	52%
Sharing about reading research (articles, ideas, etc.)	49%
Making decisions about what reading materials to use/purchase	49%
Making decisions about instruction for specific students	44%
Planning for sustainability, or what will happen when your school no longer has Reading First funds	35%
Other	15%

The findings reported in Table 7-22 look at the perceptions of meetings and collaboration across groups of Reading First participants. Agreement was widely seen by principals, coaches and teachers in regards to the Reading Leadership Team fostering a more collaborative culture.

The groups differed in their view of the RLT meetings as a good use of their time. Whereas 92 percent of principals thought the RLT was a good use of time, almost twenty percent fewer coaches (73%) and less than half of the teachers who served on the RLT (44%) agreed it was a good use of their time. Still seven out of ten teachers believed the RLT to be visible and effective. Overall though, only thirteen percent of teachers believed they had a voice in the decision making in regards to Reading First. This maybe a key factor that leads many teachers to believe the RLT is not a good use of their time.

Table 7-22
Collaboration, Reading Leadership Team, and Decision Making Across Groups

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Principals	Coaches	Teachers
Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	85%	88%	73%
Regularly attending RLT meetings is a good use of my time.	92%	73%	*44%
Reading First would not run smoothly without the RLT.	55%	40%	--
Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	--	--	70%
I feel that I have a voice in our school's decision-making about Reading First.	--	--	13%

* of the teachers who served on the RLT

Grade-Level Meetings

Reading First requirements include grade-level meetings and other opportunities for staff collaboration and communication related to reading. Grade level meetings served many different purposes across the schools. As might be expected, the most common themes were reviewing data (DIBELS and progress monitoring) and cooperative curriculum/core lesson planning at the grade level. After that, a variety of topics were discussed in many of the grade level meetings including training and professional development sessions, creating student action plans, and other non- Reading First grade level matters.

Of particular note in Table 7-23 is the high frequency of grade-level attendance by teachers. Slightly over half of respondents indicated that they attended these meetings on at least a weekly basis if not more regularly. This marked a ten percent increase from last year. Less than 20 percent of teachers indicated attending the meetings once a month or less. A clear majority of teachers of 68 percent noted that these meetings were a good use of their time, noticeably higher than their counterparts on the Reading Leadership Team.

Table 7-23
Frequency of Grade Level Meetings According to Teachers

This year, how often did…	**Never**	**Once or a few times a year**	**Once a month**	**2-3 times a month**	**1-3 times a week**	**Daily**
you attend a grade-level meeting?	1%	2%	16%	30%	47%	4%

Table 7-24 data compare the perceptions of the teachers on their participation regarding grade level meetings from this year to last. Very little has changed in their opinion with a large majority of teachers who still believed that issues important to them were discussed in an open environment with all viewpoints welcomed and the reasons for doing things explained.

Table 7-24
Teachers View of Grade-Level Meetings

At my school's **grade-level reading** meetings…	**Percent of Teachers Agree or Strongly Agree**	
	2004-05	**2005-06**
we discuss the issues of teaching and learning that the participants identify as important.	84%	84%
all participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	83%	82%
we discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	78%	81%

In focus groups, teachers stated that they learned about expectations primarily through the reading coach. This happened in a variety of settings including assorted meetings and one on

one interactions. Several teachers also mentioned the Reading First Academies as a source of these expectations.

Communication of Expectations to Teachers

Teachers then responded to the question of how consistent the messages and expectations have been for the grant as a whole. Of the 27 schools visited, there was an almost even split in those who believed the message had been consistent and those who felt it was conflicting. There were teachers in five schools who could be described the message as *mixed*. Those who thought that the message was clear often noted the improvement that occurred over the life of the grant, in particular the consensus built by the principal and coach. Those who received a mixed message expressed a frustration dealing with vague and often conflicting directions on what do. Several focus groups mentioned the conflict between the core reading program publisher representative and staff from the Reading First grant. Here are a few typical comments from teachers who held mixed views.

> *One of the core trainers told us to do one thing and then it was followed by a Reading First staff member saying something completely the opposite. Our principal didn't know what to say.* (Teacher)

> *The State would come in here and say "Don't do this now" after we had been told that's the way to do it and it had been working. We don't know where they get their information.* (Teacher)

Teachers were also asked about how they received new ideas about instruction. Most teachers in the focus group pointed toward their individual Reading Coach. Sometimes that took the form of feedback from an observation, chairing a meeting or putting on a professional development workshop. However, close behind coaches was their fellow teachers. Those learnings included observing other teachers, co-teaching or informal talks of strategies at lunch. The following were a few of the typical comments.

> *We have visited other classrooms in other schools and observed which has been effective in giving us instructional ideas.* (Teacher)

> *The co-teaching always has been an effective strategy on how to move a student. The Reading Coach's suggestions haven't been as effective moving the students forward.* (Teacher)

Next, teachers were asked about their suggestions to improve the transfer of information. Teachers in seven of the schools visited were content with the communication and recommended no changes. The rest varied in their suggestions to improve on the transfer of information based on their own situation. However, there were common themes that permeated throughout their suggestions. These included a need for a consistent message given by the reading coach that would streamline operations. Another suggestion was to limit observers to two at a time in the classroom. Some requested a more formal written explanation of their role and expectations in regards to the grant itself. A few mentioned the need to visit other schools and observe in

classrooms that were good models for what their teaching should look like. One group of teachers recommended integrated professional development for the principals and coaches (which has since been implemented by the state for cycle two Reading First schools). The following represent some typical suggestions from teachers.

> *State/Leadership should be clear on what is expected of teachers, get a common message out there to all. Simply don't change the course every time there is an unfavorable test result.* (Teacher)

> *I would like more modeling or demonstrating lessons in our classroom. We need more of that where we can ask questions afterwards. This makes us inspired.* (Teacher)

Buy-In

In 2004-05 and again in 2005-06 surveys, principals, coaches and teachers were all asked about their view of Reading First and components within the program (see Table 7-25). The buy-in issue of strongly supporting the instructional changes under Reading First witnessed little changed from last year. After seeing a large decline last year in overall in instructional buy-in from teachers that figure remained steady again with only half of teachers supporting the changes that occurred under Reading First. This is in stark contrast to the over 90 percent of principals and coaches who support Reading First's instructional changes.

Both the percent of principals and coaches noticeably declined in their belief that overcoming teacher resistance was an issue this year – they reported less teacher resistance. It is hard to know whether teachers were less resistant or less vocal, or whether principals and coaches were able to apply newly learned strategies for dealing with resistance to those situations where this was a concern.

This year, ten percent less coaches felt instruction in other subjects had suffered due to the overemphasis on the Reading First grant; still almost half of coaches felt other instruction had suffered. Contrasting this trend, the percent of teachers almost doubled (to 65% from 34%) in those who felt the grant had in fact taken away from other subjects.

The belief in DIBELS as a valid, accurate indicator continued to see a divide of over thirty percentage points between the principals/coaches and the opinion of the teachers. Teachers were only half as likely as their counterparts to believe in DIBELS in this regard. The same discrepancy was also apparent between the two groups views regarding the emphasis/ overemphasis that is placed on the DIBELS results.

Table 7-25
Buy-In by Principals, Coaches and Teachers

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree					
	Principals		Coaches		Teachers	
	04-05	05-06	04-05	05-06	04-05	05-06
I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	97%	95%	96%	92%	50%	50%
Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me this year.	33%	16%	49%	37%	--	--
I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	3%	5%	5%	5%	20%	21%
In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	18%	9%	13%	12%	50%	54%
I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	92%	93%	87%	85%	52%	56%
I am personally pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	--	--	--	69%	69%
Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	34%	37%	58%	48%	34%	65%

Coaches Building Trust with Teachers

Coaches were asked in site interviews how they build trust with teachers. While it varied somewhat among coaches based on their situation, common themes that ran through many of their answers. The most frequent items heard included "be honest with them," "stay flexible" and "be positive." Not far behind those comments was the need they felt to be confidential with teachers, an aspect not mentioned in past interviews. Another point coaches made was the need to come across that they were there to help and not evaluate.

> *They see I can do it and that I understand. I also take in to account the real life issues they have to deal with and their style of teaching. I help them grow in their own right and not a cookie cutter way. I don't try to mold them into something they are not.* (Reading Coach)

> *I try to ease them into it with the attitude of "what can I do for you." They always focus on the negative stuff, so I make them write down the positive things I said because they will forget otherwise.* (Reading Coach)

The reading coaches were asked in site visits about dealing with resistant teachers; their responses largely verified the survey data. Almost a third of the respondents indicated that they had to deal with only one or no resistant teachers at all. Still, those who did indicated the need to be persistent and to obtain backing from the principal. Other means of dealing with resistant

teachers included staying positive and asking many questions. The following were a few examples of techniques used by the coaches.

> *I must be consistent, for example if I say I am coming back tomorrow I need to follow through on it.* (Reading Coach)

> *I try to figure out why they are resistant and address it from there in attempts to show proof on what works based on research.* (Reading Coach)

Looking at the respondents' buy-in on instruction issues, little has changed at their schools from last year. Overall, principals and coaches had very high levels of instructional buy-in, with teachers generally positive but not as overwhelming as the other groups. Coaches' confidence that all students would be able to read at grade level by the end of third grade dropped this year to 68 percent, down eleven percent from the year before. This now reflects a view now far closer to that of the teachers than the principals.

Table 7-26
View on Instruction of Reading First

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	90%	85%	70%
I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably this year.	90%	95%	76%
I am confident that our school will prepare all students who in Reading First from kindergarten on to read at grade-level by the end of third grade.	85%	68%	64%

Collaboration

Principals and coaches were asked during the site visits about the level of collaboration among the teachers. Responses indicated that there was a range of types of collaboration, from teachers sharing the 'what and when' of instruction to those discussing the 'how and why.' The principals' and coaches' responses at each school were compared to degree of agreement. Principals were generally more apt to use the description of "how and why" end of the collaboration spectrum. Slightly less, about a third of coaches, were as likely to characterize their school in such high regards. The discrepancies often dealt with the specifics of grade levels where the coaches were more likely to go into greater detail. Still, positive comments were far more likely to be noted with an emphasis on the overall improvement. It seems that a segment of teachers were farther behind than others on collaboration or needed the principal or coach to facilitate the "how and the why." These teachers often represented those who were newer to the profession.

> *The answer varies by grade level. Grades two and three are far over on the spectrum on the end of talking about how students learn, matching personalities to students, who needs Read Well, how do they learn best, how can they use Sped to help the low ones, how to bring ELLs with common challenges. Those grades have conversations that are very specific and on task. They put students' names up on a board and on their own were working it, reshaping groups to make it work.* (Principal)

> *Having that focus of the data/analysis is what makes the collaboration happen; we worked our special schedule making sure all four members of the team are there, it took a considerable amount of effort, and to make our meetings happen; it used to be that their free period. Some grade levels are farther along than others; I hope to have that totally institutionalize where they feel it's' the best way.* (Reading Coach)

Coaches were then asked during the site visits where most of these conversations are taking place. Not too surprisingly, two-thirds mentioned that conversations often occurred at grade-level meetings. RLT was only mentioned by one of the coaches. Other places mentioned were the lunchroom, planning periods, and informally after school.

> *The teachers usually talk in the lunchroom and we have real good discussion during grade-level meetings.*

In their focus groups, teachers were asked to rate the feedback they received from the coach on a scale of *directive* to *reflective*. Overall, a two-thirds majority described the feedback as *directive* with a few *reflective*-leaning comments. Still many who described the feedback as *directive* did not view this technique in a negative fashion specifically mentioning that the coach should not change their method. About a quarter of the teacher focus groups described their feedback as *reflective* emphasizing the positive aspect of it including asking pertinent questions. About a half dozen groups had a negative connotation of the coach's feedback. The following represent a few of the comments from teachers in these focus groups.

> T*he group reported that the coach tended to be more directive than reflective, but that they had no problem with her feedback because they said it was almost always appropriate to the situation.* (Site Visitor)

> *The group was unanimous that their coach was directive in their feedback. They said the coach had to give a lot of feedback but that it was very positive.* (Site Visitor)

Sustainability

Going into this grant, schools and their districts were aware that the funding cycle for Reading First was only three years. It was the state's intention that during this time schools would build the necessary capacity and secure other funds for essential components of the program. In fact part of the application process and the subsequent grant selection criteria were based on the districts' infrastructure in place to sustain the grant beyond its funding life.

In the focus group with State Reading Specialists, they agreed that about half of their schools they worked with would be able to sustain the essential components of the program. It was their belief that a key predictor of sustainability was the level of progress in implementation that schools made this year. Ultimately those successes lead to schools becoming sustaining because they developed a higher level of buy-in that is capable of continuing beyond the grant.

> *The schools are feeling more empowered that they (school) can make a difference, not just waiting for us to give them answer.* (State Reading Specialist)

> *They are becoming self reflective with activities more self-evaluating, self-directing where they are now developing their own solutions. (*State Reading Specialist)

Site visitor evaluators rated the quality of the implementation at each of the 27 schools they visited. Just over half (14) believed that the school had a high quality of implementation, with 18 percent (5) of the schools rated as low quality implementation.

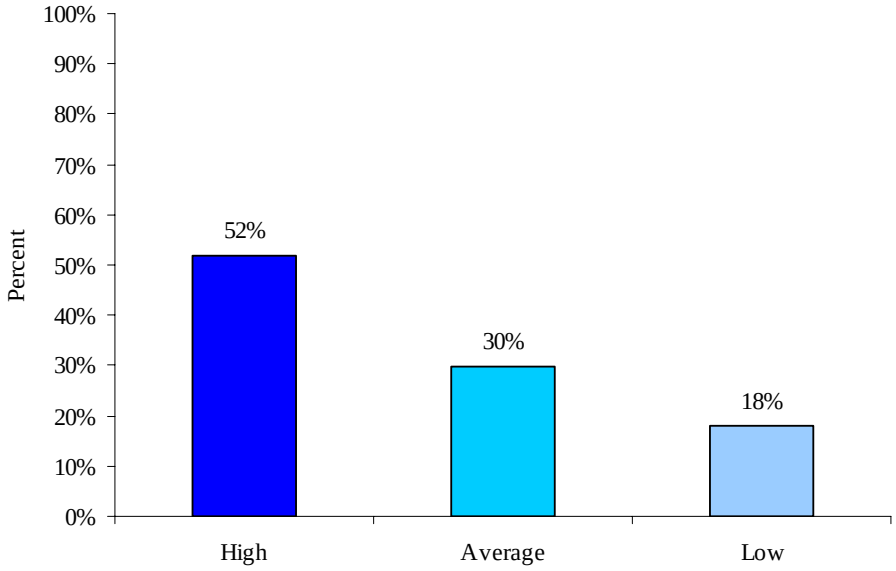

Figure 7-1
Quality of Implementation in Visited Schools

Plans for Sustainability

On surveys, 57 percent of principals reported that they had a written plan to address sustainability. The interview data confirmed this as most of the principals were at much different places on how far along that process they were. This should not come to too much of surprise as the topic of sustainability was barely addressed in RLT meetings according to the survey data. Some principals were candid that they had not really thought about it or that it was simply an area the district was handling. Those with plans were mostly vague in their answers that often included statements such as "We hope" or "We would like." A few others were specific in what that entailed and where they still currently faced funding short-falls to meet their personnel needs.

Plans the principals spoke of varied but on the financial front the majority mentioned either district money or Title I funding would make-up a portion of the shortfall. Several principals were able to detail what they were going to keep, how they were specifically going to pay for it and where they would have to make do without. Many of these alternatives dealt with doubling up or sharing coaches and intervention staff among the different schools in the district. Further, it was the principals' intention also to have teachers take on more responsibility based on the capacity built by the grant.

> *I have my own plan. I am always able to keep components that I need to make the program work and continue.* (Principal)

> *We honestly really are only on the beginning stages as we just started to put together a plan of action.* (Principal)

Table 7-27 findings look at the views on sustainability according to the principals, reading coaches and district. Three-fourths of principals believed the instructional changes of the grant would be sustained while just over 60 percent of coaches felt the same way. About 60 percent of the principals and district coordinators were pleased with the support they received from the state on sustainability while less than half of the coaches felt the same way.

Table 7-27
Sustainability According to Principal, Reading Coach and District

	Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**District**
I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	77%	61%	--
I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	60%	49%	62%

Principals were asked during on-site interviews what the State was doing to help address sustainability. Interview comments revealed that just over three-fourths of the principals indicated the state had done nothing to address sustainability nor assisted them in developing a plan. However, the level of concern over this fact was more split. Some principals spoke of their concern over how they were going to sustain the program's momentum without the same resources. Others seemed to realize for the entire grant time that the funding was not going to always be available and it was up to the schools themselves to come up with a plan. Here are a few of the comments:

> *Decisions are not being made but the district and the state hasn't been helping us at all either.* (Principal)

> *All along the State has been trying to give us the tools to build capacity, so when their component is removed we can sustain the capacity we are operating under.* (Principal)

> *The State has talked to the Principals about sustainability but it's been minimal. Their repeated position is that the districts' needs to support you. That sounds great and easy, but it's is not.* (Principal)

During interviews conducted on-site, reading coaches were asked what the lasting impact of the grant would be at their schools. About a quarter responded that the lasting impact would be the system that has been set in place and the impact of getting students to read at grade level. Additionally, coaches referred to the impact of having teachers use data and take a more differentiated approach to the classroom. Other items mentioned by the coaches included the use of scientifically based reading material and more collaboration between the teachers. A few mentioned that there would be no lasting impact. The following represent some typical comments from coaches.

> *I know based on the superintendent's label of us as a Reading First district, he will continue to support us based on the positive impact of student scores and instruction at our school*. (Reading Coach)

> *I really think if Reading First went away tomorrow the teachers would not change the way are teaching.* (Reading Coach)

> *Reading First has changed the way our schools is run and made such a difference. We have changed beyond the grant and our school has made so much progress*. (Reading Coach)

Almost all of the principals anticipated continuing every one of the elements that were essential to the grant. However, some of the functions remained inadequately funded going into the next school year. In fact, funding for reading coaches, on-going professional development and interventions were an issue according to one-third or more of the principals.

Table 7-28
Elements of Reading First Principals Anticipated Continuing

	Yes	No	Do Not Have Funding
	Do you plan to continue?		If Yes
Reading coach	95%	5%	45%
Ongoing PD in reading	100%	--	33%
Interventions	100%	--	33%
DIBELS	98%	2%	15%
Online DIBELS database	98%	2%	15%
90-min block	100%	--	11%
Core program	100%	--	11%
RLT	95%	5%	4%
Grade-level meetings	100%	--	4%

Principals were also asked what they thought would be necessary for their schools to maximize sustainability. The answers varied based on the aspects that have worked most successfully in implementing the grant. The most common element was the need for the staff position of interventionists which was specifically mentioned by about a quarter of the respondents. Also often mentioned was the need for all key personnel to be continued including the reading coach, assessment coordinator and the interventionists. This was followed by the need for continued professional development for teaches.

The following items were mentioned by at least two principals:

- Buy-in from teachers
- Substitutes to allow for teacher professional development and collaboration time
- Reading coach
- Stable leadership

Specialists in their focus group discussed what they thought their schools needed to be able to sustain the essential elements of the Reading First program after the grant had ended. The consensus was almost universally that funds vital to keeping the reading coach, assessment coordinator, and intervention system in place were mandatory in order to continue to see the program sustain its momentum. The next component that was considered necessary was the continuation of teachers who were accountable and shared a high buy-in for this method of scientifically based instruction. Specialists thought teachers would revert to their old ways if this element was no longer in place.

> *We need to have teachers who have a change of heart and our impassioned instructors where they have an intrinsic feeling that this newer methodology is working.* (State Reading Specialist)

Teachers Perception of Sustainability

According to the data in Table 7-29, only ten percent of teachers expressed they would simply move back to the way they were teaching before the grant existed. However, teachers were more mixed on whether they would meet as often as they did with the grant. Fifty-eight percent believed that in fact they would meet just as often during the grant as without it.

Table 7-29
Teachers' View on Impact of Reading First Grant

	Percent of Teachers who Agree or Strongly or Disagree
When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that I will to go back to more or less the way I was teaching reading before.	10%
When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that teachers will meet just as often (RLT, grade-levels, study groups) as we did during the grant.	58%

According to the results in Table 7-30, almost all teachers definitely would or probably would continue at least 80 percent of all of the components related to Reading First. Clearly, interventions, grade level meetings and on-going professional development garnered the most amount of support. Less than five percent indicated reservations about their continuation. The only item that that received a less than wholehearted response was Reading Leadership Teams, which had just over a third of teachers definitely supporting the continuation of that activity.

Table 7-30
Teachers' View on Reading First Components Continuing

	In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, should the following program components continue?			
	Definitely not	**Probably not**	**Probably yes**	**Definitely yes**
Interventions	--	2%	30%	68%
Grade-level meetings	1%	3%	36%	61%
Ongoing professional development in reading	1%	2%	39%	58%
Core program	2%	5%	38%	56%
90-minute reading block	2%	8%	34%	56%
Reading coach	5%	15%	36%	44%
DIBELS	4%	11%	44%	41%
RLT	4%	14%	49%	34%

Not only did teachers report on surveys that they would not return to the way they used to teach, but in focus groups, many of them reported that they felt they had improved as teachers. In many instances, they credited the coaches with having helped them make these changes. According to the teachers, this mostly entailed working one on one with the coach and getting specific feedback on improving their instruction. Many teachers were quoted saying, "I have become a better teacher." Nevertheless, about a quarter of the focus groups agreed that there had been little to no positive impact to their instruction. In fact, two such schools believed the coach had actually had been a detriment to their teaching. Other comments included more general statements of improved instruction to specific aspects of teaching including better student engagement and more self-awareness of their own performance in the classroom.

> *The coach has really changed my approach to teaching and how I look at instruction.* (Teacher)

> *You can send the coach to all the trainings you want, but if they do not have the interpersonal skills, it won't be effective. There should be more focus on coaching skills and not just reading knowledge.* (Teacher)

> *The Coach has an impact on our teaching. If the coach says something we know to do it because we trust her judgment.* (Teacher)

CHAPTER VIII
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

A major component of Arizona Reading First is the provision of professional development to principals, reading coaches, assessment coordinators, state reading specialists, and teachers. This is one means to achieve Arizona's Reading First objective of implementing a research-based comprehensive instructional program through capacity building.

This section of the report summarizes professional development activities in the third year of implementation in schools of Arizona Reading First. These activities included the Summer Conference and professional development opportunities at both the state and building level throughout the year.

Training from the State

Many professional development trainings were provided by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to help schools use effective instructional practices to improve reading. These trainings were provided at multiple levels and by a variety of trainers, mentors, and coaches.

A centerpiece of the training efforts for the third year of the grant implementation was the Reading First 2005 Summer Conference held by the ADE. The Summer Conference was presented to an audience which consisted primarily of teachers (1,024), with some reading coaches, principals, assessment coordinators, and district personnel also attending,

The 2005 Reading First Summer Conference was the first time the summer professional development occurred simultaneously for all Arizona Reading First Schools. It was held on June 14-15, 2005 in Phoenix, Arizona. It offered Reading First Schools' personnel in Arizona a unique opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments as they anticipated their third year of raising Arizona Reading First student success to new heights. Keynote speakers included Dr. Roland H. Good III, who presented on *What Data Tells Us about Children and How to Support their Successes*; Dr. David J. Chard, who focused on the important connection between reading fluency development and students' long term proficiency in understanding text; and Dr. Louisa Moats, who emphasized the close ties between phonology, vocabulary, reading, spelling, and writing. In addition, a variety of informative seminars were presented by nationally-known experts in the field of early reading. From these seminars, participants gained information designed to empower educators to make critical decisions targeting reading success for all Arizona K-3 students. Some of the topics included delivery of reading instruction, use of data, use of vocabulary, small group instruction, differentiated instruction, ELL and leadership.

This year's summer conference differed from last year's summer academy in that this was the first year all Arizona Reading First Schools were together to attend the professional development put together by the ADE. In contrast, during the months of June to August 2004, the ADE sponsored thirteen Reading Academies held in three separate sites in the state. Schools that had implemented Reading First grants invited their K-3 teachers, special education/ ELL teachers,

reading specialists, and coaches to attend the academies. The objective of the Summer Reading First Academy II was to increase K-3 reading instructional effectiveness to promote early reading success. Since this was the second year for the Reading Academy, the focus shifted to enhancing implementation and instruction. The specific topics included delivery of reading instruction, interventions, use of data, use of vocabulary, and managing the reading program.

The state also held specialized trainings for coaches, principals and state reading specialists (SRS); these meetings were designed to give coaches, SRS and administrators the knowledge and tools they needed to solve problems at their schools. Training sessions were often facilitated by the state program staff but sometimes involved outside trainers as well. Overall questions on the usefulness of these trainings were asked on the spring 2006 surveys. Surveys were received from 65 of the 73 schools; an 89 percent response rate. These included surveys from 1,179 of 1,567 teachers, 65 coaches, 63 assessment coordinators, and 62 principals.

The majority of teacher respondents were regular classroom teachers (92%); additional teacher respondents included language arts/reading (5%), special education (3%), and bilingual (1%). Regardless of position, respondents are referred to as "teachers" unless otherwise noted.

The implementation checklist, which is another instrument completed by the SRS, included six questions about the content and audience for professional development. These items describe the existence of or participation in professional development but do not measure the quality of professional development offerings.

Professional Development for Principals, Coaches and Assessment Coordinators

Overall, principals, coaches and assessment coordinators remained pleased with the quality and usefulness of state-provided trainings, although there were some areas where the trainings fell short of meeting their needs.

According to the spring surveys, over three-fourths of the principals noted that they had attended the AZ Reading First Summer Conference as well as the Leadership Academy at Desert Canyon. In addition, over 83 percent of the coaches and assessment coordinators attended the AZ Reading First Summer Conference (see Table 8-1).

Furthermore, results from the spring surveys also showed that over three-fifths of the principals felt that the professional development they received from the state during the 2005-2006 school year had provided them with useful tools for working with resistant staff. This is a 15 percent gain compared to the previous year. In contrast, only 46 percent of the coaches felt the same way as principals; this area showed a decrease of almost 22 percent as compared to the previous year.

An important area to note is that approximately half of the principals and coaches and less than 40 percent of the assessment coordinators felt that the state-provided professional development could have been better differentiated to meet the needs of the different groups.

Table 8-1
Principals/Coaches/Assessment Coordinators Perceptions of Professional Development from the State

Did you attend the following Reading First professional development offerings in 2005:	**Yes – All of It**		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Assessment Coordinators**
Leadership Academy at Desert Canyon	77%	--	--
AZ Reading First Summer Conference	75%	83%	89%

The professional development that I received <u>from the state</u> this year (coach/principal meetings)…	**Percent Strongly Agree/ Agree**					
	2005			**2006**		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Assessment Coordinators**	**Principals**	**Coaches**	**Assessment Coordinators**
consisted of high-quality presentations.	86%	86%	84%	83%	85%	85%
provided me with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.	86%	--	--	85%	70%	--
provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	48%	68%	--	63%	46%	--
included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	66%	68%	77%	71%	70%	75%
was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	--	--	--	47%	37%	48%

Over 70 percent of the principals, coaches and assessment coordinators were pleased with the quality of training they received from the state and Reading First during the 2005-2006 school year. Although over 68 percent of the principals, coaches and assessment coordinators were pleased with the amount of training in instructional leadership and coaching they had received from the state (Table 8-2), when asked if the amount they had received was too much or too little, 53 percent of the principals, 70 percent of the coaches and 76 percent of the assessment coordinators felt the amount of training they had received was too little.

Table 8-2
Quality and Amount of Training

I am very pleased with…	Percent Strongly Agree/ Agree	
	2005	2006
	Principals	Principals
The quality of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	78%	77%
The amount of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	73%	73%
I am very pleased with…	**Percent Strongly Agree/ Agree**	
	2006	**2006**
	Coaches	**Assessment Coordinators**
The quality of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	77%	71%
The amount of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	68%	68%

According to the interviews, approximately two-fifths of the principals and coaches thought all of the trainings had been useful. Some coaches felt that the trainings met their needs very well. They felt that going deeper into data analysis and student engagement all validated what the principals and coaches do. Specifically praised was the usefulness of the trainings on group work on data analysis, classroom observation checklist, 'principaling' from the office and classroom and IDEA information on reauthorization. Other positive comments included providing specific feedback to teachers, developing reading intervention programs, student engagement and the Desert Canyon Institute among others.

Overall, they were all amazing and they allowed me to do my job well. Without them, I would be lost. (Principal)

I loved the trainings on data analysis, group work, feedback, principaling and classroom observations. (Principal)

I enjoyed the training about principaling. It helped me to evaluate where I was at. It was all helpful. It really has been the best thing. (Principal)

I'm very thankful to the district for letting me go and for the state for providing it. I could not have accomplished without it. They brought it down to specifics. (Coach)

Data analysis-making the connection was extremely useful. (Coach)

I enjoyed the data analysis, group activities, and trainings on student engagement. (Coach)

Others mentioned specific items like the three day Reading Academy, sustainability, DIBELS and getting set up to use it, template training, AIMS blueprints, whisper coaching and differentiated instruction. In addition, results from the interviews also showed that several of the coaches positively mentioned the training they received on DIBELS. They felt it was useful and it helped them not only to look at the scores but at the individual needs and that helped them plan their interventions.

> *I loved the template training across grade levels. Personally, sustainability was useful. (Coach)*
>
> *DIBELS progress monitoring was useful. (Coach)*

Some principals mentioned that the Desert Canyon Institute was a valuable training received from the state. They thought that overall it was quite good.

> *It was useful and practical stuff I could apply to my job. (Principal)*

In contrast, during the interviews several principals and coaches felt that certain training was repetitive and not well delivered. Many principals noted that some of the training they had received had a great deal of redundancy and did not have enough differentiation to take into account the different schools and the different individuals' prior knowledge level. One principal felt that the trainings were repetitive, rushed and disorganized. Just like the principals, a few coaches agreed that the trainings were not appropriately differentiated to take into consideration the levels of experience and previous knowledge and they were too repetitive.

> *It was just not differentiated. It was redundant; it was presented to us again and we have already gone through it. (Principal)*
>
> *A great deal wasn't very strong or was repetitive. (Principal)*
>
> *For a new coach, it would probably be okay. However, it has not been very effective training for me and it did not seem very well planned and it was not cohesive. (Coach)*
>
> *A lot of the trainings were not useful primarily because I am so familiar with the topics. (Coach)*

Areas where Most Professional Growth Was Experienced

Principals

During the interviews some principals mentioned specific professional development topics from instructional leadership that they enjoyed:

- Group work on data analysis
- Classroom observation checklist (T-4s)
- Developing reading interventions
- IDEA Information on Reauthorization
- Feedback to teachers
- Principaling from office and classroom
- Student engagement

Coaches

From a list of topic areas, coaches felt they had experienced the most professional growth in classroom observations, coaching methods, and student engagement. These were the top three selections last year, too. Some also reported their most growth was in interpreting and working with assessment results (Table 8-3).

Table 8-3
Coaches Areas of Most Professional Growth

Thinking about what you have learned through Reading First, in which area(s) do you feel you have made the <u>most</u> professional growth this <u>past year</u>: *(select up to three)* ***Reported in highest to lowest rank order***	
2005	**2006**
47% Coaching methods	31% Classroom observations
47% Classroom observations	31% Coaching methods
46% Student engagement	31% Student engagement
41% Using the core program effectively	29% Interpreting, working w/assessment results
27% Interpreting, working w/assessment results	28% Selection and use of intervention programs
24% Selection and use of intervention programs	28% Using the core program effectively

Assessment Coordinators

As seen in Table 8-4, assessment coordinators reported they had experienced the most professional growth in interpreting and working with assessment data, supporting differentiated instruction and grouping students.

Table 8-4
Assessment Coordinators Areas of Most Professional Growth

Thinking about what you have learned through Reading First, in which area(s) do you feel you have made the <u>most</u> professional growth this <u>past year</u>: *(select up to three)* ***Reported in highest to lowest rank order***	
2005	**2006**
63% Interpreting assessment results	60% Interpreting, working with assessment data
54% Helping teachers interpret results	43% Supporting differentiated instruction
51% Using results effectively	40% Grouping students
36% Administering and scoring assessments	35% Administering and scoring assessments
34% Managing data	25% Using/managing databases
20% Monitoring individual students	22% Diagnostic assessments

Areas for Future Professional Development

The professional development interests among principals, coaches, and assessment coordinators reflected the diverse needs of participants. In other words, most respondents had different personal priorities for future training. It is also worth noting that other topics may be of interest to participants, but were just not among their most pressing needs.

Principals

During the interviews, a few principals mentioned that they would appreciate having an individual mentor.

> *Providing a mentor principal to watch or shadow that is assigned to each principal would be nice. Someone I can call on if I have questions. That would be extremely comforting. (Principal)*

Additionally, principals mentioned various other topics that would be useful for training:

- Would like to have same training as coaches and assessment coordinators
- Have a national specialist (Jo Robinson) come and spend a week visiting different schools in their LEA and debriefing with them
- Identifying the top things to work on year 1, year 2, etc. and focusing the training on the things the schools are working on
- Would like to have a combination of trainings, have 2 meetings with everyone else and 2 at individual site
- Data analysis
- Interventions (tier 1, 2 and 3)
- Modeling for teachers
- Teaching techniques for intensive students
- How to manage principal duties
- Break out session with principals talking with other principals from other LEAs and sharing ideas on scheduling and interventions
- Individual coaching or providing a mentor principal to watch and shadow
- Updates on current research

Coaches

From the same list of topic areas that they were given to select areas for professional growth, coaches also selected their three areas of interest for future professional development. Differentiated instruction, which was not in the top five choices last year, topped the coaches list for desired additional training. Working with resistance – conflict resolution jumped to ranking second from a rank of third the year before (Table 8-5).

Table 8-5
Coaches Areas for Additional Training

Next year (06-07), in which area(s) would you most like additional training? (select up to three) ***Reported in highest to lowest rank order***	
2005	**2006**
32% Selection and use of intervention programs	31% Differentiated instruction
28% Providing constructive feedback	26% Working with resistance, conflict resolution
27% Working with resistance, conflict resolution	25% Coaching methods
25% Coaching methods	25% Presentation skills
25% Working with ELL students	23% Working with ELL students
24% Presentation skills	20% Providing constructive feedback

During the interviews some coaches said that they would like to have a chance to see other coaches and how coaching works on a practical level.

> *It was new to us and it was like "how do we do this?" and the state could have been "like this" showing us a real good coach in action. (Coach)*

Other coaches also mentioned that they would like to have more discussion with other reading coaches. They would also like to see other coaching methods and what is working at other schools.

> *There was not enough discussion with other reading coaches to find out if they are bumping into walls and how to get around them. (Coach)*

A few coaches also noted the need for more training on dealing with ELL students and special education students.

> *We haven't received any training on special ed. and ELL teaching strategies. (Coach)*

Some coaches felt that the training should have been more leveled to the experience of the coach.

> *Maybe stagger the trainings for new coaches, due to varying degree of coaching experience. (Coach)*

Additionally, during the interviews coaches mentioned various other topics that would be useful for training:

- How to deal with teachers (new teachers)
- How to provide constructive feedback to teachers
- How to do lesson modeling effectively
- More training on comprehension and strategies for intermediate grades
- How to make wise choices about supplemental and intervention programs
- More training on Walk to Read
- Time sequencing (data analysis should be given before DIBELS assessment)
- Hands on experience with their own data
- Learn more strategies to teach particular lessons in class
- How to moderate/facilitate grade level team meetings
- Receive training a year before the implementation of the program
- More on cognitive coaching
- More supervised practice to know if they are doing it well
- Research development and practices

Assessment Coordinators

From the list of topic areas on the spring surveys, assessment coordinators mentioned that they would like further training in supporting differentiated instruction, assessing ELL students, using/managing databases and interpreting/working with assessment data (see Table 8-6).

Table 8-6
Assessment Coordinators Areas for Additional Training

Next year (06-07), in which area(s) would you most like additional training? (select up to three) ***Reported in highest to lowest rank order***	
2005	**2006**
42% Using assessment results effectively	32% Supporting differentiated instruction
39% Monitoring interventions	25% Assessing ELL students
31% Working with ELL students	24% Using/managing databases
29% Helping teachers interpret results	21% Interpreting, working with assessment data
22% Interpreting assessment results	19% Diagnostic assessments
22% Working with resistance, conflict resolution	16% Working with resistance; conflict resolution

Professional Development for Teachers

Summer Conference

Although most of the teachers who responded to the spring survey said they had participated in the 2005 Reading First Summer Conference (71%), this was a decrease of over 14 percent compared to the percent of teachers who attended the 2004 Summer Reading Academy II (85.4%). The majority of these teachers reported that the 2005 Academy consisted of high-quality presentations and provided them with instructional strategies they have used in their classrooms (Table 8-7).

Table 8-7
Teachers' Perceptions of the Summer Academy

The Reading First Summer Academy…	Percent Strongly Agree/ Agree	
	2005	2006
Consisted of high-quality presentations.	65%	68%
Provided me with instructional strategies I have used in my classroom.	73%	71%
Included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	--	62%

Teachers' Perceptions of the Helpfulness of Assistance from Coaches

According to ADE, coaches were supposed to be in each classroom "at least twice a month." But, only about 40 percent of teachers reported that the coach observed them that often (29% 2-3 times a month, 11 % 1-3 times per week, and 1% daily). Nearly the same percent of teachers (37%) reported that the coaches provided them with specific and constructive feedback on their instruction. As seen in Table 8-8, the frequency of coach observations and feedback showed little change from the year before.

Table 8-8
How Often Coach Provided Feedback

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?						
2005	4%	24%	25%	30%	16%	2%
2006	3%	26%	29%	29%	11%	1%
the reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?						
2005	7%	25%	25%	29%	13%	1%
2006	7%	28%	27%	25%	11%	1%

As to the helpfulness of the coaches to teachers, similar to last year, training from coaches received consistently high helpfulness ratings; approximately three-quarters or more of teachers reported in the spring surveys that various forms of assistance from the coach were usually or always helpful. These included help with interpreting assessment results, administering and scoring student assessments, feedback after observations, demonstrating lessons, providing quality interventions, and monitoring effectiveness of interventions (Table 8-9).

Thus interestingly, teachers reported that coaches were very helpful, although the coaches were not in the classrooms or providing specific instruction as often as Reading First staff had suggested. Indeed, 90 percent of the coaches agreed/strongly agreed about feeling very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback so other reasons seem to be at work here.

Table 8-9
Teachers' Perceptions of the Helpfulness of Assistance from the Coach

How helpful was/were:	Usually/ Always	
	2005	2006
Assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	85%	82%
Assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	86%	81%
Feedback on your instruction provided by the coach after observation of your classroom.	78%	79%
Demonstration lessons given by your reading coach?	76%	78%
Assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	77%	77%
Assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	77%	73%

Areas Where Most Professional Growth Was Experienced

During the year, teachers received professional development in reading from state project staff, core program trainers, coaches, districts, and other providers. Across all types of professional development, the survey asked teachers to select three topic areas in which they had experienced the most professional growth during 2005-2006. Just like last year, the top three choices were fluency, student engagement and phonemic awareness (Table 8-10).

Table 8-10
Teachers Areas of Most Professional Growth

Thinking about what you have learned through Reading First, in which area(s) do you feel you have made the most professional growth this past year: *(select up to three)*	
2005	**2006**
39% Phonemic awareness	38% Fluency
39% Student engagement	37% Student engagement
38% Fluency	32% Phonemic awareness
31% Using the core program effectively	29% Using the core program effectively
26% Administering and scoring assessments	26% Phonics

Areas for Future Professional Development

From the same list of topic areas, teachers were most interested in future professional development in the areas of using intervention programs effectively, differentiated instruction and working with ELL students (Table 8-11).

Table 8-11
Teachers Areas for Additional Training

Next year (06-07), in which area(s) would you most like additional training? (select up to three)	
2005	**2006**
38% Using intervention programs effectively	33% Using intervention programs effectively
32% Working with ELL students	30% Differentiated instruction
31% Using supplemental programs effectively	28% Working with ELL students
29% Comprehension	27% Using supplemental programs effectively
22% Student engagement	16% Student engagement
20% Fluency	16% Fluency

Other Building Level Professional Development for Teachers

As seen in Table 8-12, more than half of coaches reported that teachers did not receive training from the core program publisher in 2005-2006. Of those who received training, there were mixed responses about the helpfulness; almost a fourth found the training rarely or never useful while a little more than three-fifths found it usually or always useful.

In contrast, data from the implementation checklist showed that similar to spring 2005; about 90 percent of the SRS reported that in spring 2006, all continuing K-3 teachers participated in the training provided by the publisher of their core-reading program. Furthermore, almost all of the SRS reported that by the spring 2006, all new K-3 teachers received local training and support in the core-reading program.

While about 30 percent of the coaches reported that teachers did not receive any training from other external consultants, on the other end, about one-fourth reported this happening 5 or more times this year. Most coaches (66%) found such external trainers “usually” or “always” helpful (see Table 8-12).

Indeed, in interviews, many respondents reported that they liked the opportunity to hear from the experts, for example, bringing in outside people who had specific experience. In fact, some specific consultants were noted as very helpful. In particular, multiple coaches mentioned the following professional development opportunities as being extremely useful:

- Susan Hall, Jo Robinson
- Three-day Reading Academy
- Desert Canyon Institute
- DIBELS training
- Harcourt and Houghton Mifflin training: templates, support for At-Risk Readers
- WestEd trainings
- Trainings with Huck: Whisper Coaching, In and Out Coaching, Data Analysis and Student Engagement

Table 8-12
Building Level Training

How frequently this year have the following external trainers provided <u>building-level reading-related professional development</u> to teachers at your school?						
	Did not take place	**Once**	**Twice**	**3 times**	**4 times**	**5 or more times**
Publisher representatives/trainers	51%	18%	9%	9%	6%	6%
Other contracted experts/trainers	29%	14%	22%	5%	8%	23%

Over the 2005-06 school year, how helpful were:	**Never Helpful**	**Rarely Helpful**	**Sometimes Helpful**	**Usually Helpful**	**Always Helpful**
Publisher representatives/trainers	8%	14%	14%	32%	32%
Other contracted experts/trainers	4%	2%	27%	13%	53%

Over the 2005-2006 school year, how helpful was	**Percent "Usually" or "Always" Helpful**	
	2004-05	**2005-06**
training in the core program from the publisher?	45%	57%

Assistance from State Staff

In addition to professional development described in the previous section, ADE supported schools through ongoing communication and technical assistance. As is shown in table 8-13, principals were fairly positive about the assistance they received from the state; 68 percent agreed that the state was responsive to their needs. While many interviewed principals noted that they had very little contact with the ADE project staff, those who did have contact were usually positive:

> *They've told us that if we do this right, many kids will learn to read. The ADE Staff has been looking and willing to do whatever they need to do including admitting mistakes. They'll go back to the drawing board if it is not working.* (Principal)

> *I really appreciate the dialog; they are open, honest and helpfu*l. (Principal)

Coaches were much less likely to agree that the state was responsive to their needs; only 46 percent agreed – a drop of 30 percentage points from a year ago.

Table 8-13
View of State Staff

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree			
	Principals		**Coaches**	
	2004-05	**2005-06**	**2004-05**	**2005-06**
ADE project staff are responsive to my school's needs.	--	68%	76%	46%
	Coaches 2005-2006 Usually or Always Helpful			
How helpful were visits from other state RF project staff	62%			
ADE project staff visit did not take place	40%			

State Reading Specialists

According to the ADE, the role of the SRS is to provide content expertise in reading instruction as needed to assist schools in implementing the program and monitoring their progress. The responsibilities of the SRS are to: (a) serve as the local representative of ADE, (b) engage in professional development sponsored by ADE, (c) provide technical assistance to the districts and schools in his/her region, (d) provide expertise in SBRR and its implications for classroom instructional practice, (e) and provide ongoing support and assistance to schools in addressing reading achievement in his/her region.

When asked to characterize their roles, SRS described that they were a resource at the school on many fronts. Their activities included data analysis, sorting interventions, assisting teachers in differentiated instruction, modeling lessons, putting together center activities, and providing professional development both including DIBELS and the Summer Institute.

The evaluators conducted a short survey and focus group with the SRS on March 28, 2006. The information from both data sources was combined to present an overall description of the attitudes and opinions of the SRS. Fourteen of the original seventeen- SRS took part in the focus group and survey, and one more completed the survey via email, for a total of fifteen total survey responses. Two SRS who missed the survey had previously left prior to the end of the school year. Also of note, three SRS were new to the position, which is down from four a year ago. These respondents obviously could not reference previous years in the school.

After a rocky start, the County staff and the SRS developed a mutually satisfactory relationship. Year 1 clearly started off slowly with less than half of the county respondents satisfied. In contrast during the same time period, two-thirds of SRS were pleased with the Reading First work. The peak occurred in Year 2 with over two-thirds of both groups being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with Reading First as part of the County ESA. Slight shifts in perceptions occurred in Year 3; more SRS respondents and the same number of County staff were "very satisfied" but less of both groups were "satisfied."

> *The SRS staff represented a great resource for providing training in multiple areas. All schools in the county with the exception of the three charter schools and two district schools requested additional support.* (County Personnel)

> *Our State Reading Specialist is very good and we trust her with the work she has done with our schools. It has been beneficial to have the senior leadership and having the County Specialists coordinate with the State Reading Specialist.*
> (County Personnel)

Table 8-14
Satisfied with the Overall Work of Reading First as Part of Your County ESA System

	Not at all Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
Year 1	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**	**Count**	**Percent**
SRS	1	8%	3	25%	4	33%	4	33%
County	1	5%	10	53%	5	26%	3	16%
Year 2								
SRS	1	7%	4	27%	3	20%	7	47%
County	3	15%	3	15%	5	25%	9	45%
Year 3								
SRS	2	12%	5	30%	0	0%	10	58%
County	3	15%	5	25%	3	15%	9	45%

There was an increase in the percentage of SRS who reported that they were able to spend time fulfilling their role as a Reading Specialist; almost half (47%) categorized their ability to do so as "very much" compared to just 20 percent the previous year. The results are shown in Figure 8-1.

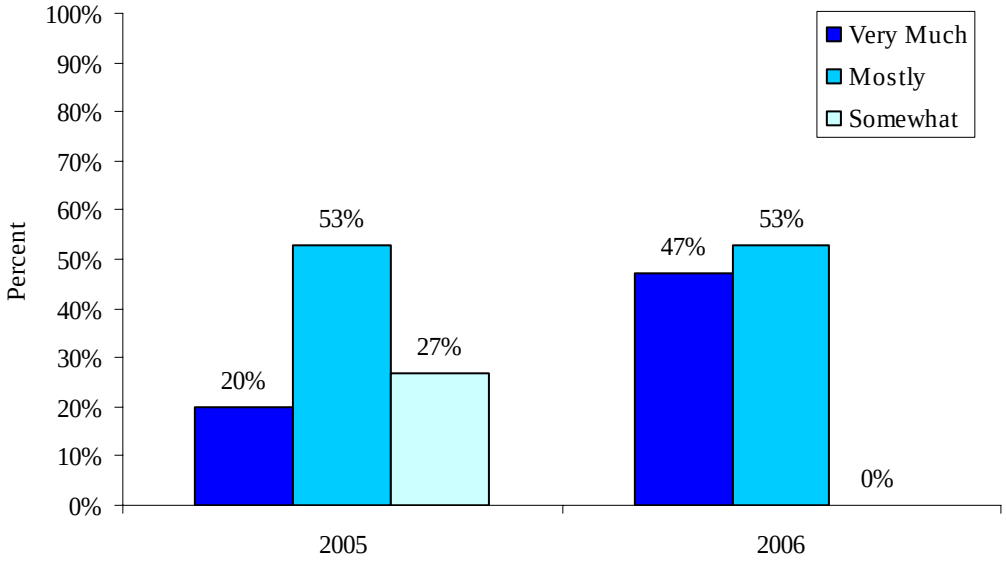

Figure 8-1
Time Spent Doing What Is Needed

The SRS almost universally believed they had been able to be a better resource at their schools this year compared to last. As shown in Table 8-15, all but one SRS believed they had "very much contributed" to the implementation of Reading First at the schools with which they worked. In focus groups, the SRS described how their time was better-spent this year; the issues they dealt with were more specific than in the past and they were able to provide in-depth discussions with school staff. Most of their time was spent working with the reading coach (although the state expected them to also work with the principal and RLT).

Table 8-15
SRS Position Was Instrumental to Reading First Schools' Ability to Successfully Implement the Program

	2006 Percent
Very Much Contributed	78.6%
Contributed	14.3%
Somewhat Contributed	7.1%

*Only 14 respondents

School and district personnel concurred with the SRS; the majority of the principals, coaches and district coordinators believed the SRS were a major asset in the implementation of Reading First. Especially noteworthy was a substantial increase in principals' perceptions of SRS; at least 84 percent agreed that they were valuable, trusted, and understood the school's culture.

Table 8-16
View of the Role of the State Reading Specialists

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree			
	Principals		Coaches	
	2004-05	2005-06	2004-05	2005-06
The state reading specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	65%	84%	73%	76%
I trust our state reading specialist with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	66%	85%	80%	80%
Our state reading specialist understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes those into account when making recommendations.	65%	86%	74%	78%

	Percent of District Coordinators Agree or Strongly Agree
State reading specialists are responsive to our district's needs.	95%

Information collected from the interviews supports the above data, especially noting the improved value of the SRS' involvement at the school. Respondents' description of SRS' role

was almost identical to the one the SRS outlined above. Almost nine out of ten coaches' and principals' comments were highly positive about the services provided by the State Reading Specialist(s). More than in any past year, principals almost always made positive mention of their SRS in interviews. They described the relationship as responsive, supportive, and helpful in working with teachers and answering questions.

> *The SRS has been extremely helpful and has a true ability to make things easier to understand. They've also been able to answer all of our questions in specific detail.* (Principal)

> *The SRS has been helpful with observations, demonstrations, working one on one with teachers and just giving us a much needed idea of what a RF school should look like. Her honesty was much appreciated as she indicated that we did not have a literacy environment which was very helpful.* (Principal)

In interviews, coaches again attested to a positive point of view of the SRS reflecting an especially affirmative relationship and noting their involvement has been a "wonderful benefit" to their school. Remarks often characterized the SRS as "invaluable" and "knowledgeable." These comments were very typical of the coaches.

> *It's been useful. She does come in and observe, she helps answer questions, and she asks good questions. She is a good source of information and works well with the staff.* (Reading Coach)

> *Our reading specialist is very knowledgeable. Teachers like her and she provides great feedback and instruction if needed. She has been very helpful to me personally.* (Reading Coach)

While a few interviewed principals remained somewhat negative toward their SRS, many remarked on the positive changes since last year, stating they were more comfortable with their SRS and felt they were more useful.

> *Our SRS is very accessible and supportive. This was a big change from last year when, when the relationship with a different SRS assigned to the school was very negative, critical, and unhappy. (*Reading Coach)

> *SRS was low key, but she offered great ideas. The last two years I didn't feel that way. I felt that SRS came only to scrutinize, rather than help.* (Principal)

Tier 1

Again after the second year of implementation of the Reading First, the ADE Reading First Office spent time during the summer of 2005 analyzing student/school data. As a result of this analysis, ADE staff identified schools where a significant number of students did not meet critical grade level benchmarks and did not make adequate progress in reading.

Based on this analysis and other observations, the ADE Reading First Office prepared to provide additional technical support and assistance in implementing scientifically research based instructional practices to the 19 schools, which was an increase of eight more schools mostly making up of schools within the Roosevelt District.

Table 8-17
Reading First Intensive Technical Assistance Tier 1 Schools
2005 - 2006

LEA	School	Core Program
Coolidge	West (K-2)	Harcourt
	McCray (3rd)	
Glendale	Glendale American	Open Court
	William C. Jack	Harcourt
Liberty	Liberty	Harcourt
Maricopa County Regional	Phoenix Thomas J. Pappas	Open Court
Page	Desert View	Houghton Mifflin
Pendergast	Westwind	Houghton Mifflin
Red Mesa	Red Mesa	Houghton Mifflin
	Round Rock	Houghton Mifflin
Roosevelt	C J Jorgensen	Voyager
	J R Davis	Voyager
	Maxine O Bush	Voyager
	Ed & Vern Pastor	Voyager
	Southwest	Voyager
	Sunland	Voyager
	T G Barr	Voyager
Somerton	Tierra Del Sol	Harcourt
Tolleson	PH Gonzales	Houghton Mifflin
Washington	Mountain View	McGraw Hill

For the schools classified as Tier 1 in 2005-2006, the average effectiveness rating across the four grade levels was 64 percent. For the other schools, the average rating was 73 percent. Although it had been anticipated that with additional technical assistance these schools would end the year on part with their peers, within the Tier 1 group only six schools surpassed the overall group average of 70 percent.

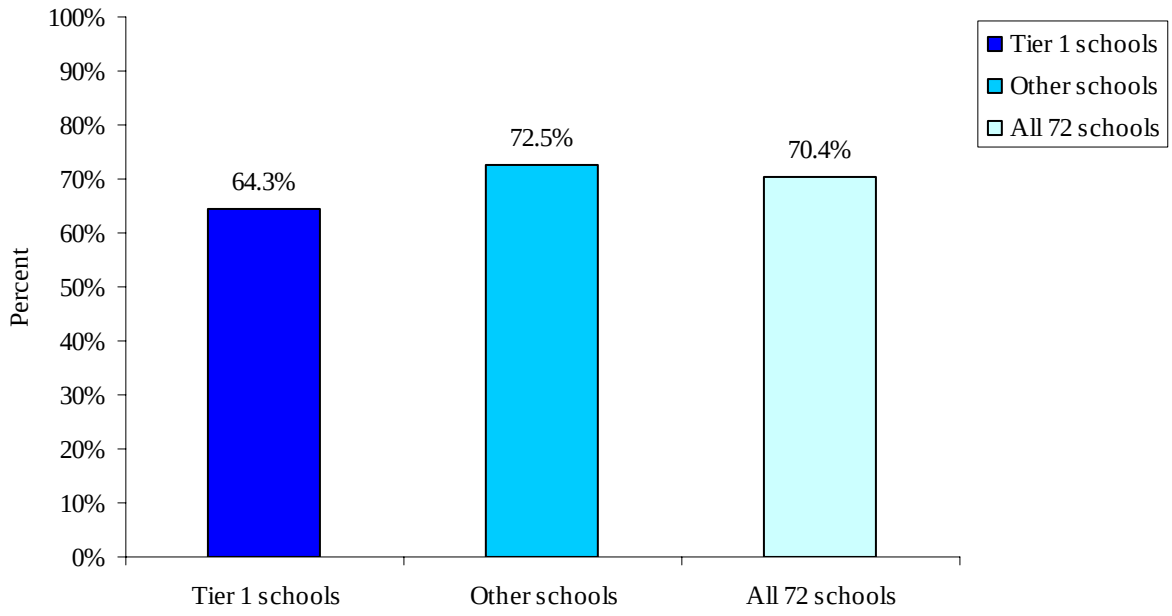

Figure 8-2
Mean Effectiveness Rating of Schools 2005-2006

The evaluation team visited ten of the schools that received Tier 1 technical support. Unlike last year where many schools reported initial chaotic meetings filled with too many participants and differing messages, this year the support was much more beneficial according to principals. Most principals were positive about the technical assistance they received from the state.

> *It has filled out needs. They were very supportive and were always here for us. They would come down and email us with any feedback or answers or guidance that was needed regarding the teachers and programs.* (Principal)

> *It's been great, they don't' go after anybody and just look at what's not working. Then they pitch strategies to the teachers in a discussion.* (Principal)

In contrast, a few principals remained unhappy with the technical assistance from the state, stating that it was not specific enough to meet the needs of the school.

CHAPTER IX
USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA

Data and Assessment Systems

Reading First schools were expected to review, discuss, and use data from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and other student assessments in various ways. According to the ADE, data reviews were to make up a part of cross-grade and grade-level collaboration and be a focus of the Reading Leadership Team. The reading coach and assessment coordinator were to help make grouping recommendations for interventions based on data.

In the spring of 2006, the SRS reported on the checklists that *all* schools had a DIBELS assessment system in place to administer /score, report and analyze data; this is an increase from 88 percent in the fall of 2005. Also on the checklists, it was reported that teachers at 88 percent of schools discussed reading assessment data twice a month at grade level meetings.

Coaches were also asked to identify which assessment(s) were used in their K-3 reading program. Ninety-eight percent reported using DIBELS for screening and progress monitoring. Sixty-five percent reported using DIBELS for diagnosis as well.

Furthermore, survey responses indicated that schools had done a great deal of work through Reading First to establish systems for administering, analyzing, and sharing results of reading assessments. Most principals, coaches and teachers agreed they had a system in place for administering and analyzing DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.

Table 9-1
School Has an Organized Data System

	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
Our school has an organized system for administering the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	100%	98%	91%
Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	100%	94%	86%

According to the ADE, data should also be used in progress monitoring for all students, particularly for those in need of interventions. Progress monitoring should include data from core program unit and theme assessments, as well as progress monitoring assessments from the DIBELS. Coaches were asked about the proportion of classrooms that monitor progress regularly. Eighty-two percent reported 'all classrooms,' sixteen percent 'nearly all classrooms.' They also identified that in addition to DIBELS (95%), core reading assessments were used about 60 percent of the time and teacher developed assessments about one-quarter of the time.

Validity of Results

As to the administration of DIEBLS, representatives from ADE, along with the State Reading Specialists, trained reading coaches and assessment coordinators. The reading coaches and assessment coordinators in turn trained other staff. The majority of schools also met together for additional training to go over the "rules" before giving DIBELS. Several schools noted learning also occurred through Reading Leadership Team meetings and other district level trainings. In addition, many teachers mentioned learning from other teachers and interventionists, peer tutoring, the DIBELS website, the Voyager program, and WestEd. Overall, it seems all schools continued to receive some level of training and support from the state.

> *All staff have gone to district DIBELS training sessions. Some also went to state training. Additionally, the coach holds review sessions before benchmark testing.* (Reading Coach)

> *The state reading specialist and our assessment coordinator trained the staff. We also do recalibration meetings to make sure we are scoring and administering the test correctly.* (Reading Coach)

In the spring of 2006, the SRS concluded that 89 percent of all schools were administering their assessments accurately and in a timely fashion. This is an increase from 81 percent in the fall of 2005. Overall, reading coaches were confident their teams were administering DIBELS correctly and consistently. Instead of giving the DIBELS mini-quiz as per last year's survey (which revealed that there were a lot of misunderstandings), this year coaches were asked about whether scoring rules were clear before testing occurred. Ninety-six percent of all coaches responded that they were fully confident that all members of their assessment team thoroughly understood the administration and scoring of DIBELS before each testing period.

> *Team members meet together before each testing period, review the guidelines and practice on each other a couple of times. We are very strict about the rules for scoring, and if they have any doubts about a score, someone else will retest.* (Reading Coach)

> *The team actually met before they administered it and we practiced it. We made sure we timed it consistently and did a practice run before they started testing.* (Reading Coach)

> *Some teachers have asked the reading coach to observe to make sure they do it correctly and the benchmark task force goes over the rules a week prior to testing.* (Reading Coach)

A few reading coaches had some concerns regarding accuracy because they believed they were not providing enough training for staff. Ways that these schools were working to improve included making sure all staff were well trained, working together as a team, and involving multiple staff to double check results.

> *Some teachers don't get it, they have inconsistent scoring methods. We try to do a refresher training before the testing period.* (Reading Coach)

We found that there were a lot of inconsistencies and interruptions. Now the assessment coordinator and reading coach do the testing to make sure it is accurate. (Reading Coach)

Sometimes we see different scores for us and the teacher. With many people delivering unobserved, it's easy to drift away a bit when one does DIBELS. We constantly retrain and redirect to make sure we are consistent. (Reading Coach)

Uses of Data

The SRS reported a high level of schools using DIBELS data to analyze, select strategies, and monitor progress. They indicated that most schools, 97 percent, are using the data, an increase from 90 percent in the fall of 2005.

Surveys and site visits offered specific ways on how schools were using the data. Teachers and school project leaders routinely used data for identifying, placing, and monitoring interventions and for grouping students into small groups within their classroom. Principals and coaches also used data to look at school-wide trends. Areas where data were used less frequently included meetings with parents and modifying lessons from the core program.

During site visits when teachers were asked about how often they looked at reading assessment data, 52 percent responded once or more per week; that basically flat (an increase of only one percentage point) compared to last year. One-third of teachers indicated that they looked at reading assessment data two or three times a month.

The reading coach helps us with data and presents during our weekly meetings. (Teacher)

All our Reading Leadership Team meetings are about data. All teachers have to attend these meetings every other week. (Teacher)

Table 9-2 shows the responses for how principals, coaches and teachers "usually" or "always" reported they used the results of reading assessments.

Table 9-2
Use of the Results of Reading Assessments

	Percentage Usually or Always Using Results		
I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	**Principals**	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
communicating with teachers about their students	93%	96%	--
communicating with teachers about their instruction	90%	75%	--
communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs	--	--	85%
making decisions about student grouping	91%	92%	--
grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom	--	--	91%
modifying lessons from the core program	--	57%	63%
identifying which students need interventions	--	97%	96%
matching students to the appropriate interventions	88%	97%	97%
monitoring student progress in interventions	--	96%	92%
helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction	--	84%	--
looking at school-wide (K-3) trends	98%	95%	64%
meeting with parents	68%	34%	68%

In order to know more about how assessment results influence decisions, principals were asked in interviews to provide an example of a big picture/school-wide decision based on data. Many principals discussed using assessment data to identify students needing more intensive assistance. Others described ways that they were delivering more assistance include targeting students for summer school, hiring part-time teachers to work with students, and expanding tutoring and intervention groups.

> We now have better ways of grouping students and improving staff development. We have also developed a keen sense of student achievement and placement. (Principal)

> Based on data, we altered tutoring and intervention groups. Data was used to determine the need to provide continual instruction and tutoring. (Principal)

Several principals talked about focusing on certain grade levels based on an analysis of test scores. This was based largely on a desire to boost test scores before promoting students to the next grade.

> *Based on the data, our grade results showed we needed to put all our resources to the 3rd grade. I think it worked. (Principal)*

> *We pulled all personnel in the intervention in order to differentiate instruction so we could pull the Kindergarten students up before they got into the 1st grade. . (Principal)*

We decided that second grade was a high priority based upon an analysis of test scores. So, teacher assistants were redistributed and interventions were more focused on the second grade. (Principal)

Most principals also discussed shifting staff and resources around based on the data. This included a better use of teachers, coaches, instructional assistants and even volunteers. They were extending programs into other grades, making intervention groups smaller, adding after school programs and providing more tutoring.

We took a look at how instructional assistants were used. They no longer attend to teachers, but now work as reading interventionists with students in small groups. (Principal)

This is the first year that I mandated cooperative teaching just for interventions. We divide up interventions 'within' intervention groups. We have also changed the allocation of para-professional support. (Principal)

The core program used for the 3rd grade was not working well for the lowest students, so we made the decision to use an alternative core program. (Principal)

Overall the principals believed that the greatest success had to do not only with everyone looking at data, but everyone using it and seeing the positive change in the students' reading abilities.

CHAPTER X
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Arizona Reading First program completed its third year of implementation in schools in 2005-2006. All 63 cohort 1 schools had three full years of implementation, and the nine cohort 2 schools that began a year later finished their second year of implementation. Both cohorts demonstrated positive gains in student achievement as well as growth in the implementation of program components.

This section of the report draws from findings across all of the previous chapters to address the original evaluation questions. Thus the conclusions and recommendations are a compilation of the major themes in the areas of student achievement, teacher preparation and resulting instruction, and the building of leadership capacity at the school and district level.

Student Achievement: DIBELS and AIMS Assessment Test Scores

The original evaluation plan posed the following two questions about Arizona Reading First and student achievement:

- How effective was Arizona's Reading First Initiative in increasing students' knowledge and abilities related to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension?

- How well are second and third grade Arizona students meeting the standards for performance in reading as measured by the Arizona Instrument to Measure Success (AIMS), the State assessment and to what extent is performance improving over time?

Conclusions

Student achievement in the different components of reading was measured both by the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) and by Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS).

Overall, results on the DIBELS were mixed. A larger percentage of students at each grade level had ended the each year at benchmark than in the previous year. And for kindergarten, second, and third graders in both cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools, there were good gains from the beginning to the end of the year (Figure 10-1). In the first grade, however, there were fewer students scoring at benchmark at the end of the year than at the beginning.

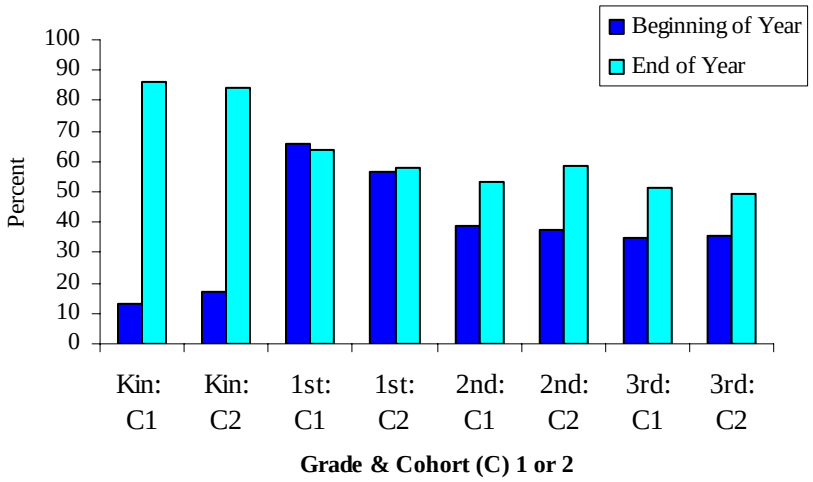

Figure 10-1
Percent of Students at Benchmark on the DIBELS,
Beginning & End of the Year 2005-2006

In kindergarten, the results were the most dramatic. The ADE set a goal at the beginning of the year for kindergarten, aiming to have 75 percent of students at benchmark by the end of the year. Despite the low percentage of students entering kindergarten at benchmark, on average across schools, well over 80 percent of kindergarteners ended the year at benchmark.

In first grade, 66 percent of students began the year at benchmark (this was the kindergarten group who ended the prior year with 76 percent at benchmark); yet by the end of the year, only 64 percent tested at benchmark. Despite the decline, the program still saw a higher percent of first-grader students ending the year at benchmark than in the previous two years.

In both cohorts in second and third grades, the program saw an increase of about 15 percent more students at benchmark at the end of the year, compared to the beginning. The end results were higher for both cohorts and both grades than at the end of the two previous years. Despite these real gains in second and third grades, only slightly more than half of the students were at benchmark in these two grades, and significantly more movement is required to reach the program goal of all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

The evaluation also compared the achievement of students at Arizona Reading First schools to the achievement of students at a demographically similar group of 11 of comparison schools. At all grade levels, a higher percent of Reading First students scored at benchmark at the end of the year than did students in the Comparison group.

The AIMS assessment provided a second measure of the achievement of students at Arizona Reading First schools. Compared to last year, a higher percentage of Reading First students passed AIMS (met or exceeded standards); in 2005, 50.0 percent of students passed, while in 2006, 53.5 percent passed. This was comparable to the achievement of students at comparison

schools, but lower than the statewide average, which had 75 percent of third-grade students meeting or exceeding standards.

Although the two assessments, DIBELS and AIMS, do not measure exactly the same reading skills, about the same percent of third grade students were reading proficiently as assessed by DIBELS (51.5%) as by AIMS (53.5%). Still, by either measure, just over half of the students at Arizona Reading First schools reached the goal of being proficient readers by the end of third grade.

At Arizona Reading First schools, as at other high at-risk schools, students often move in and out of schools. In order to measure the impact of Reading First on the students who stayed in one school over a longer period of time and were exposed to the program over several years, the evaluation also looked at the subset of students who spent three years in Reading First. Second-grade students who had been in Reading First since kindergarten and third-grade students who had been in since first grade were slightly more likely (4.4 and 3.3 percent, respectively) to end the year at benchmark than were students who had been in the program for less time.

Recommendations

- The examination of student assessment results shows the need to pay particular attention to what happened at first grade, where fewer students were at benchmark at the end of the year than at the beginning. Review school-level data, and for schools that experienced this drop, encourage the state reading specialists to work with the principal, coach, Reading Leadership Teams (RLTs) and/or first-grade grade-level teams to work together to identify possible causes of the drop. This might include, for example, pacing in the core program, insufficient fluency practice, or a need for more interventions for first-grade students; reasons may or may not be similar across schools.

Teacher Preparation and Resulting Instruction

In the original evaluation, two questions were raised about the transfer of knowledge, first from the program to teachers, and then from teachers to students:

- How effective was the professional development approach in helping teachers acquire knowledge and skills about phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension, and transfer the knowledge and skills to their classroom instruction?

- To what extent are teachers incorporating reading assessments into their classrooms and using the results of the assessments to change their instructional approaches and address students' learning needs?

Conclusions

Teachers continued to present mixed views of how Reading First impacted them and their instructional practices. Overall, teachers reported favorably on some aspects of Reading First including professional development and reading instruction but had a number of other complaints about the way Reading First worked at their school as to collaboration and teaching strategies.

Teacher response to state-provided professional development was largely positive. For example, over 70 percent of teachers reported that the ADE trainings and workshops gave them instructional strategies that they used in their classrooms. Further, training from coaches received consistently high ratings from teachers; about 75 percent or more of teachers reported that the various forms of assistance from the coach were usually or always helpful. Three-fourths of teachers also believed that overall reading instruction has improved noticeably this year. Also, regardless of which core reading program a school selected, teacher satisfaction with the program was high (70%). Perhaps most significantly, the large majority of teachers (90%) reported that they would not return to the way they used to teach, even after their school was no longer funded by Reading First. In addition, over half of the teachers predicted that collaboration with fellow teachers would also continue beyond the Reading First grant.

These results are countered by expressions of teacher dissatisfaction with some components of Reading First. Only half of teachers agreed that they 'strongly support the changes that are occurring under Reading First.' Fewer than half of the teachers believed that the Reading Leadership Team meetings were a good use of time. Many teachers reported that they felt shut out; only 13 percent of teachers felt they had a say in the decision process. Teachers also complained of receiving mixed-messages about how they were supposed to teach, and the number of teachers who believed Reading First was taking away from other subjects almost doubled (to 65% from 34%) from last year.

To what degree did Reading First actually affect teachers' practices? Again, results were mixed. Based on observations conducted at a third of schools, the evaluation found *increases* in

- The clarity of presented lessons (observed in three-fourths of classrooms);
- The use of guided questioning to support student learning (present half the time);
- The provision of direct, frequent, and effective feedback (present just over half the time);
- Student engagement (although this was still an issue of concern in about a third of observed classrooms).

On the other hand, compared to previous years, observers noted no real change in the following:

- The use of explicit modeling (lacking in two-thirds of visits);
- Close monitoring of student understanding and appropriate adjustments to instruction (present about 60 percent of the time).

In terms of other practices that affect what happens in the classroom, a number of key features of Reading First were well-established. The use of data, for example, was routine; the overwhelming majority of teachers (over 90%) regularly used the results of reading assessments to group students and match them to interventions. All but one school offered their first- through

third-grade students an uninterrupted reading block of *at least* 90 minutes per day. For the most part, schools followed the scope and sequence of their core reading program, although some disagreements about the meaning of "fidelity to the core program" remained. Most teachers reported that their students received some differentiated instruction, although concerns remained that it was not always adequate. A particular concern was the appropriate instruction of students who were learning English even as they learned to read; fewer than half of all teachers believed that that Reading First was meeting the needs of English language learners.

Under Reading First, students who were not at benchmark were to receive interventions outside of the regular reading block, to work in smaller groups on skills specifically targeted to meet their needs. In 2005-2006, Arizona Reading First schools already had their intervention structures (plans, schedules, providers, materials) in place and reported greater confidence in their intervention program than the year before. However, they served a smaller number of students than the prior year; about half of schools reported that all students who needed interventions got them, while the other half struggled to make difficult choices about which students to serve first. The primary obstacle cited at those schools that did not provide interventions to all students who needed them was insufficient staffing.

Recommendations

- Continue and increase professional development opportunities that cover strategies to boost student engagement, enhance teachers' use of explicit modeling, and help teachers make informed decisions about appropriate modifications depending on student responses in the classroom. Because not all teachers need assistance in these all areas, continue current trainings and build a differentiated range of offerings. It might be helpful to work with coaches so that they can identify key professional needs of teachers and either provide for them, or help refer teachers to appropriate LEA- or state-provided professional development.

- Teachers valued and utilized opportunities for professional collaboration with their colleagues. As cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools see reduced Reading First funding in the coming year, assist them in finding the resources to make continued collaboration possible.

- Work with schools to ensure that principals, coaches, and teachers understand the needs of English language learners. The newly released report of the National Literacy Panel provides a great deal of information about the transfer of skills across languages, for example, that could assist teachers in working with students.

- Encourage state reading specialists to work with schools individually to look for time and resources to provide interventions to as many eligible students as possible. Perhaps at a coach or principals' meeting, schools that have successfully managed to provide interventions to all students could share some of their strategies with other schools.

Capacity & Leadership Building at the School and District Level

The evaluation plan submitted with Arizona's original Reading First plan asked the following two questions in this area:

- To what extent has Reading First helped develop instructional leadership in coaches, principals, and LEAs?

- How effective is the system of support for schools and districts to help all key stakeholders to contribute to the improvement of students' reading performance and sustain improved performance over time?

Conclusions

As the ADE brings on a new group of schools in the 2006-2007 school, increasingly the responsibility for sustaining the Reading First approach will shift to LEAs and individual schools. In that sense, the ultimate answer to whether the program successfully built leadership and support systems will be answered in the coming years.

Data from this year's evaluation, however, provides some initial answers. Overall, Reading First schools reported receiving the support they needed from their LEA. LEA Reading First coordinators and principals agreed on the duties and level of support provided to the schools from the LEA. Principals were satisfied, for the most part, with their LEA's level of support for Reading First, although most also believed there was room for improvement in facilitating district-wide meetings for principals and coaches and providing professional development and technical assistance to support change.

At the school level, principals and coaches were very positive about Reading First at their schools. Buy-in of principals and coaches to the instructional changes occurring under Reading First's remained high this year (over 90%). According to the vast majority of all principals, coaches and teachers, the Reading First grant fostered and built a more collaborative culture and better communication about reading in their schools. Almost all of the principals indicated they wanted to continue the major components of the program into the next year. This support is the foundation for efforts to sustain the practices instituted under Reading First.

Furthermore, nearly all of the principals were performing the essential leadership tasks that insured the smooth running of Reading First within their buildings – tasks such as collecting DIBELS data and getting it entered into the data management system, attending grade-level and Reading Leadership Team meetings, and providing a master schedule that protected a minimum of 90 uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction. Importantly, the principal was clearly viewed as instructional leader and visible advocate of reading by both the teachers and coaches.

One important concern was the continued uneven frequency of observations by the coach, and especially by the principal, and the rarity of feedback provided to teachers. This was the case although both principals and coaches said they understood that observations and feedback were expectations of all Reading First schools.

This year, both the state reading specialists and the coaches reported that the role of the coach was clearly defined and understood. Unfortunately, the coaches reported they were significantly short on spending the required 80 percent of their time in the classroom; they reported spending 27 percent of time "observing, demonstrating, and providing feedback to K-3 teachers."

Principals, too, understood their role and almost all reported feeling more comfortable observing teachers and providing feedback this year compared to last year. Yet, just over 70 percent of principals were able to consistently observe in classrooms. Slightly fewer were able to consistently give constructive feedback. Indeed, observations remained the area in which principals had the greatest difficulty fulfilling expectations according to both state reading specialists and the principals themselves. Furthermore, over 40 percent of teachers reported that the principal was only in their classroom at most once or a few times over the entire year. Feedback after an observation was even less common.

A second major concern was the high level of leadership turnover. In this third year alone, 12 of 73 principals were new to their school. This meant that these principals did not start the school year with the detailed understanding of assessment data, the core reading program, and the delivery of interventions that Arizona Reading First had worked so hard to develop in principals. In addition, 18 of the reading coaches were also brand new to the position at their respective school; they too were behind their peers in developing the Reading First skills, culture and relationships. These new coaches needed to start with the very basic "how to coach" training, while third-year coaches were able to tackle more sophisticated issues. Even those coaches with experience but moving to another Reading First school had to spend the first months learning the new culture and building trust. This meant that implementation at these schools might have been at a different pace than other schools, despite expectations to the contrary. Turnover may even have played a role in why certain schools lagged behind others in regards to implementation of the grant – and it most certainly holds longer-term implications for sustainability of aspects of the grant.

Recommendations

- Reports of communication problems were substantially reduced, compared to the first year. Maintain the patterns established in the past two years of providing a consistent message and solicit feedback in order to identify and attend to misunderstandings early in the year.

- Be explicit in communication with principals, coaches, and teachers so they understand the role of the Reading Leadership Team in setting and monitoring school reading goals. If Reading Leadership Teams are to continue in a meaningful way, their role must clear so teachers do not feel shut out. Since direct communication between the ADE and teachers occurs only a few times per year, coaches and principals will need to communicate messages about the Reading Leadership Team, and other forms of teacher involvement in Reading First. Perhaps state reading specialists can help ensure good communication about the value of collaborative planning and implementation and the role of the Reading Leadership Team and help assure that such school-level collaboration really takes place.

- Continue to advance the LEAs support for Reading First in the schools. The LEA role in providing professional development is crucial, and especially with the decreasing funds for the cohort 1 and 2 schools. ADE should work with LEAs to expand provision of trainings and technical assistance that are aligned with Reading First to all LEA schools, as well as facilitation of district-wide meetings for principals, coaches and teachers. LEAs can also work to align their curricula and district requirements to more easily accommodate the Reading First model.

- Work with coaches and principals to remove obstacles to conducting observations and providing feedback. The obstacles and solutions will most likely be different for coaches and for principals, and may also differ across schools. Thus this is probably a productive area for state reading specialists, LEA coordinators, and schools to strategize together. For coaches, making more time to be in the classroom may mean relinquishing other tasks that take up substantial portions of time. Specifically, the elimination of the assessment coordinator role should not lead to an increase in the amount of time coaches spend on data, which will only make it more difficult for them to work individually with teachers on their instruction. For some principals, particularly new ones, knowledge about reading instruction and/or experience conducting observations may be the issue; in such cases, it is very helpful for principals to observe other principals conducting walk-throughs. For other principals, competing demands in their buildings make it difficult to regularly protect time for this work; in such cases, the state, LEA and principal will need to devise more individualized solutions. It would be helpful for state reading specialists to work together to think of ways to help leaders meet these expectations.

- Build professional development and technical assistance for new principals and coaches into routine planning for Reading First, both at the state and district level. Encourage LEAs to develop a plan to orient and support new leaders at their Reading First schools as part of their larger sustainability plan.

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